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Security Council

Fifty-third Year

Provisional

3875th Meeting

Friday, 24 April 1998, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Owada	(Japan)
Members:	Bahrain	Mr. Buallay
	Brazil	Mr. Amorim
	China	Mr. Shen Guofang
	Costa Rica	Mr. Berrocal Soto
	France	Mr. Dejammet
	Gabon	Mr. Dangue Réwaka
	Gambia	Mr. Sallah
	Kenya	Mr. Mahugu
	Portugal	Mr. Monteiro
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	Slovenia	Mr. Türk
	Sweden	Mr. Dahlgren
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir John Weston
	United States of America	Mr. Richardson

Agenda

The situation in Africa

Report of the Secretary-General (S/1998/318)

98-85272 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Africa

Report of the Secretary-General (S/1998/318)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Algeria, Argentina, Bangladesh, Belgium, Cameroon, Canada, Colombia, the Comoros, Cuba, Cyprus, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Germany, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Italy, Kuwait, Lebanon, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malawi, Malaysia, Mauritania, Morocco, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, South Africa, Tunisia, Uganda, Ukraine, the United Arab Emirates, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zimbabwe, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Baali (Algeria), Mr. Petrella (Argentina), Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh), Mr. Reyn (Belgium), Mr. Belinga Eboutou (Cameroon), Mr. Fowler (Canada), Mr. Ocaziones (Colombia), Mr. Djabir (Comoros), Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba), Mr. Zackheos (Cyprus), Mr. Olhaye (Djibouti), Mr. Elaraby (Egypt), Mr. Mohammed (Ethiopia), Mr. Henze (Germany), Mrs. Cornette (Guyana), Mr. Pal (India), Mr. Wibisono (Indonesia), Mr. Terzi di Sant'Agata (Italy), Mr. Abulhasan (Kuwait), Mr. Moubarak (Lebanon), Mr. Ibrahim (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya), Mr. Rubadiri (Malawi), Mr. Hasmy (Malaysia), Mr. Ould Deddach (Mauritania), Mr. Zahid (Morocco), Mr. Ramaker (Netherlands), Mr. Gambari (Nigeria), Mr. Kolby (Norway), Mr. Kamal (Pakistan), Mr. Mabilangan (Philippines), Mr. Park (Republic of Korea), Mr. Jele (South Africa), Mr. Hachani (Tunisia), Mr. Semakula Kiwanuka (Uganda), Mr. Yel'chenko (Ukraine), Mr. Samhan Al-Nuaimi (United Arab Emirates), Mr. Mwakawago (United Republic of Tanzania) and Mr. Mapuranga (Zimbabwe) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter dated 22 April 1998 from Mr. Kofi Asomani, Director of the Liaison Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees at United Nations Headquarters, which reads as follows:

> "I would like to request that the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Mrs. Sadako Ogata, be allowed to address the Security Council, in accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, during the Council's consideration of the item entitled 'The situation in Africa'."

If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mrs. Sadako Ogata.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council also agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mrs. Sylvie Junod, Head of the Delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross to the United Nations.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I have received a letter dated 20 April 1998 from the Chargé d'affaires of the Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations, in which he requests that the Secretary for Relations with States of the Holy See be allowed to deliver a statement for the Holy See during the Council's discussion of the item on its agenda. In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations and in the absence of objection, I will, at the appropriate time, invite the Secretary for Relations with States of the Holy See to address the Council.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Archbishop Jean-Louis Tauran (Holy See) took the seat reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: The Security Council will now continue its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/1998/318, which contains the report of the Secretary-General submitted pursuant to Security Council presidential statement S/PRST/1997/46 of 25 September 1997.

The first speaker is the representative of Gabon.

Mr. Dangue Réwaka (Gabon) (*interpretation from French*): Thanks to the excellent initiative of the United States of America, which presided over the Security Council in the month of September 1997, we are gathered here today to discuss the crucial question of conflicts in Africa. We hope that our work here will proceed in a constructive spirit and that, beyond good intentions, it will lead to tangible results — in other words, that it will be followed by deeds.

In our view, the Secretary-General's report is a sound presentation of the problems involved in African conflicts and proposes a certain number of solutions that deserve the utmost attention. We agree with the diagnosis contained in this report regarding the sources of conflict in Africa, both endogenous and exogenous. Only an accurate vision of the sources of conflict make it possible to envisage appropriate action to deal with or prevent conflicts.

Given this twofold approach, and taking into account that most conflicts break out in Africa because of economic weakness, we wish to emphasize the measures that need to be taken by institutions of the United Nations system in support of the efforts made by African countries. The proposal of the Secretary-General to examine ways and means of developing an appropriate structural adjustment programme is a step in that direction. In this context — relieved, for example, of their debt burden, these countries would have greater prospects of achieving both subregional and regional economic integration, as envisaged in the Abuja Treaty of June 1990.

The African countries have for almost a decade now been undertaking courageous political reforms that bear witness to their commitment to build more open societies in which the exercise of political power rests on democratic values. While armed conflicts are not exclusively an African reality, it is nonetheless true that the conflicts now taking place on the African continent warrant urgent preventive measures. The Secretary-General's opinion that to prevent conflict in Africa is to defend humanity itself deserves to be embraced. This concern has always inspired reflection and efforts on the part of African States, leading to the establishment of the Organization of African Unity's Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution.

The Central Organ of the OAU Mechanism is already doing notable work. Its members constantly have before them crises affecting the continent, and they suggest solutions and initiate immediate action to facilitate the political settlement of the disputes that arise. The role played by the Mechanism in the prevention of armed conflict through the early warning system that has been adopted by member States deserves to be highlighted.

Such mechanisms, which have already proven their usefulness, need to be strengthened and provided with all the support they need.

These measures are important, and we should all support them, for even though most current conflicts are taking place within national borders, their repercussions can lead to disputes between States and can destabilize entire subregions.

Whenever able, African leaders and African States have spared no effort to resolve crisis situations before they degenerated into violent armed conflict. It is in that context that the President of the Gabonese Republic, His Excellency El Hadj Omar Bongo, has always made available his good offices with respect to the settlement of crises affecting African countries. Very recently, with the invaluable assistance of other African Heads of State, President Bongo agreed to mediate in the conflicts affecting our sister countries, the Central African Republic and the Republic of the Congo (Brazzaville).

But as the Secretary-General rightly observes, Africa, owing to the diversity of the sources of its conflicts, cannot bear sole responsibility for the emergence of those conflicts and cannot be called upon to resolve them on its own.

The indispensable cooperation in the prevention of conflicts and the maintenance of peace that must always exist between the Security Council and subregional organizations means that there can be no delegation of responsibility in the form of United Nations disengagement in Africa. That is why we continue to reaffirm our preference for a true partnership for peace

in Africa between the United Nations and subregional organizations on the one hand, and between the African States and the international community on the other.

Whatever the solutions that are advocated, we can never overemphasize the role that the Security Council absolutely must play to its full capacity, as the indispensable driving force in coordinating and reconciling initiatives for the maintenance of international peace and security. Only the Security Council can stand above the rivalries and sensitivities that too often continue to dampen the energies of the various parties contributing to the needed mobilization of the international community in helping to resolve and prevent tension in Africa and, beyond Africa, in the world at large.

Mr. Monteiro (Portugal): Realism, pragmatism and objectivity: these are the perspectives that frame the very important report of the Secretary-General on conflict and peace in Africa. And it is now up to the international community, the States Members of the United Nations and Africa itself to respond in the same vein.

Portugal intends to take up the Secretary-General's challenge, and is heartened by his words pledging that the United Nations not only seeks but welcomes its role in forging a new beginning in its relationship with Africa. We will support this process not only here in the Security Council, in the General Assembly and in other parts of the United Nations system, but also in the European Union and other international forums.

One concept seems to stand out in the Secretary-General's report, and that is the absolutely fundamental need for political will. Political will is needed on the part of African States themselves, but it is equally required from the international community as a whole. It is needed to find political, not military, solutions for the problems that face Africa today. Political will is needed to commit to the principles of good governance, in democracy and with respect for human rights and the rule of law. Political will is needed from the international community to help free economic development in Africa from its constraints. And political will and courage are very much needed to avoid future situations in which the United Nations would unfortunately be seen to have turned its back on the African people.

In a pragmatic spirit, I would like to make a few preliminary remarks on certain aspects of the report. My delegation agrees that early warning mechanisms for conflict prevention also require early action to make them useful. Concrete measures should be considered to ensure that the United Nations, and the Security Council in particular, provides a timely response to impending crises.

The Secretary-General is right to point out that, when the international community is engaged in peacemaking efforts, the non-proliferation of mediation efforts should be encouraged. What is important is not how many are involved but whether or not their efforts are tightly coordinated towards the same goals. The United Nations has a central role to play in ensuring this, as it did successfully in Mozambique, which is now a model to follow in conflict resolution.

Sanctions can be a useful tool in conflict resolution, and we agree that they must be better targeted so that those politically responsible are the ones that are directly affected, while the population at large is spared as much as possible. I am pleased to note here that Portugal is able to respond positively to the appeal by the Secretary-General regarding legislation making the violation of a Security Council arms embargo a criminal offence under national laws. We already have such legislation.

The proliferation of arms is a scourge on the African continent. More must be done to stop the illegal flow of weapons, particularly small arms, across borders from conflict to conflict. In this context, I would like to stress the importance of preventing arms that have been collected at the end of one conflict from ending up in another war on the other side of the continent. The United Nations should have a clear role to play here, supported by Member States, in ensuring that weapons collected are destroyed.

We support the Secretary-General's call upon African countries to reduce their defence budgets. We recognize, however, that this is not always easy or possible in certain cases where internal stability is threatened. The international community can also help by providing adequate support, including financial incentives, to Governments that enter into agreements to reduce their military budgets. Portugal agrees that this entire subject of arms proliferation should be taken up by the Security Council.

Portugal is actively supporting efforts to reinforce the capacity of Africa to respond to conflicts, including peacekeeping efforts. The international community should continue to assist in the development of these capabilities. The Portuguese Foreign Minister, Mr. Jaime Gama,

stressed the importance we attach to this at the Security Council meeting of 25 September 1997, held at the initiative of the United States, which led to the report before the Council today. In particular, he referred to the pivotal role the Organization of African Unity (OAU) should play in this regard.

But he also stressed that the United Nations, and the Security Council in particular, has the ultimate responsibility in the maintenance of international peace and security, and it cannot shirk this burden. When Africa needs the United Nations, the United Nations must not turn its back. This is not only a question of responsibility under the Charter of the United Nations; it is ultimately also a question of common sense. The paralysis to which the Secretary-General refers must never return to this Organization and its Member States.

In concrete terms, the emphasis given in the report to preventive deployment is merited. Timely action taken to prevent conflict can save lives and resources, and we fully support resorting to this type of response. Regarding the implementation of comprehensive settlements, Portugal agrees that a multidisciplinary peacekeeping operation may well represent the best chance to establish peace and to build a foundation for lasting development, based on respect for human rights and the rehabilitation of civic institutions.

Portugal will continue, to the best of its ability, to contribute and to participate in United Nations peacekeeping operations in Africa, as it has done in Mozambique with the United Nations Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ), in Angola with the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM) and the United Nations Observer Mission in Angola (MONUA) and in Western Sahara with the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO).

Turning now to humanitarian assistance, we can generally endorse the recommendations made by the Secretary-General and are ready to contribute actively to their development. We agree that all special human rights missions should be funded from assessed contributions and strongly endorse, with him, the notion of children as "zones of peace".

The recommendations regarding refugee camps are also welcome, particularly in ensuring the safety of the camps and the separation of combatants from refugees. The proposal to hold combatants financially liable to their victims under international law when civilians are made the deliberate target of aggression is an interesting one, both in Africa and elsewhere. However, it is not immediately clear to us how this proposal would be implemented.

We are encouraged to note the importance the Secretary-General attributes to post-conflict peace-building, particularly his view that peace-building elements should be explicitly and clearly identified and integrated, from the outset, into the mandates of peacekeeping operations. We fully share this view, and last year Portugal tried to bring precisely this question before the Security Council during informal consultations with a view to its formal consideration. This process is crucial to ensuring a smooth transition after the withdrawal of peacekeeping operations, and many peace-building components are an integral part of those operations from the very beginning.

Portugal endorses the "strategic framework" approach to peace-building, which would provide an integrated strategy, through the definition of criteria, to help countries in crisis and permit the coordinated intervention of States, international organizations and non-governmental organizations.

While on the subject of peace-building, I would like to refer to the case of Angola, where a peacekeeping operation is winding down. This has been a major investment in peace by the international community. But many tasks remain to be completed and will have to be carried out in a peace-building context, as defined in the report before us today. Angola will therefore be an important test of the international community's resolve and commitment to these concepts, and we hope that all Member States will support this effort and not abandon the Angolan people.

We could not agree more that peace requires both good governance and sustainable development. They are two sides of the same coin. If it is true that the international community must help Africa towards achieving real economic growth, it is equally true that good governance must be practised if development and peace are to become deeply rooted.

The process of democratization and respect for human rights and the rule of law are fundamental pillars of the edifice of good governance. But, as the Secretary-General reminds us, development itself is a human right and the principal long-term objective of all countries in Africa.

My delegation is ready to work on many of the recommendations made by the Secretary-General in his very important report. The momentum should be maintained, and we believe the Security Council should respond positively to the Secretary-General's call to reconvene biennially at the ministerial level to assess the situation and to hold a summit-level meeting.

As I stated earlier, Portugal will work hard in support of the international community's efforts in Africa. To this end, we have already proposed that a Euro-African summit be convened in the year 2000 to establish, for the first time, a political dialogue at the very highest level between the two continents. The European Union has adopted this proposal, and talks have begun with our African partners to make this a reality.

The problems that face Africa are not easy to overcome, and many human and material resources are required. But I agree with the Secretary-General that these problems can be overcome with political will. Let us show that will.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): The Russian delegation is grateful to the Secretary-General for his substantive and useful report on the causes of conflict and ways to overcome conflict in Africa. We note the relevance of this serious, comprehensive and highly intelligent document, prepared at the request of the Security Council at its ministerial meeting on 25 September 1997.

This is also an important contribution of the Secretary-General to the efforts of the international community to promote durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. The report contains a sober and comprehensive analysis of the causes of the emergence and persistence of numerous armed conflicts and crisis situations in Africa, which undermine the political and economic stability of entire regions, entail enormous suffering and loss of life and obstruct the fulfilment of Africans' aspirations to peace and progress.

Of particular significance of the report is that it proposes a wide range of both short- and long-term measures aimed at preventing and settling armed conflicts and humanitarian disasters and at strengthening peace and stability on the continent. We fully share the Secretary-General's view that a solution to this most important task can be achieved only through carefully considered and coordinated efforts by the international community as a whole and through the mobilization of the political will of all interested States, both in Africa and beyond its borders. The Russian Federation is prepared for constructive interaction in this area. We support the Secretary-General's conclusion regarding the need to step up efforts to prevent and settle conflict situations on the basis of the Charter of the United Nations, one of its most important principles being the peaceful resolution of disputes.

We note that the fundamental role and responsibilities of the Security Council are being realized in the implementation of numerous United Nations peacekeeping operations in Africa. Simultaneously, there is a need to strengthen the Security Council's capacity to monitor the authorized activities of regional and subregional organizations and coalitions in the field of peacekeeping.

We attach the greatest importance to the conclusions regarding the priority role of Africans themselves in preventing and eliminating conflicts on the continent, the effective use of preventive political diplomatic action, the strengthening of Africa's peacekeeping potential and the development of close interaction between the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the African subregional organizations on these issues.

The report gives pride of place to the question of the attitude towards sanctions, with emphasis on a cautious, selective approach, taking into account humanitarian limits to the use of this weapon by the international community. We support this position and are prepared to work on concrete steps to develop it. There is also the need for a more rigorous attitude towards compliance with the arms embargoes introduced by the Security Council.

Regarding the weapons trade, including the proliferation of small arms, there is a need for a clear distinction between the legitimate right of all countries to ensure their own security, on the one hand, and illegal flows of weapons, on the other; the Secretary-General rightly points out the need to combat the latter.

It is obvious that the recommendations contained in such a complex and multifaceted report require further careful consideration, and many of these recommendations do not lie within the direct competence of the Security Council. In particular this involves specific measures in the economic area, including, for example, the recommendations regarding immediate steps to convert unliquidated debt obligations into grants. We

assume that the competent forums will thoroughly study such an idea.

We deem it worthwhile to continue in the Security Council, and in other United Nations bodies to whom the report is addressed, intensive work and analysis of this document, in order to prepare relevant, practical proposals to implement its recommendations.

Such an approach, taking into account the division of labour and responsibility between the various components of the entire United Nations system, will promote the enhancement of the effectiveness of actions of the United Nations and the international community as a whole in the sphere of preventing and settling conflicts in Africa.

Mr. Dahlgren (Sweden): One of the strongest and most frightening memories I have from any journey I have made is from a small church about an hour's drive from Kigali, the capital of Rwanda. I arrived there early one evening last year and was brought into a small room that had only one table in it. On that table, put together in a large pile, were the naked craniums from thousands of men, women and children. You could see on the skulls how these people had been killed — not by an explosion, not by bullets, but by knives and machetes in the hands of their own neighbours. I will never forget the sight of those remains from the genocide four years ago in Rwanda. And the more one learns about what happened during that brief period when up to 1 million people were killed, the more one wonders what the rest of us, outside Rwanda, were doing to prevent it or to stop it. That must never be allowed to happen again.

As the Secretary-General has underlined, the responsibility for the future of Africa rests primarily, of course, with the African people and their leaders. But the international community must also maintain and strengthen its commitment to Africa. As the example of Rwanda shows, that commitment has not always been evident. Unfortunately, there are even more recent examples — like eastern Zaire and Congo (Brazzaville). I think that deep inside us we all know what is needed. There is no lack of knowledge or information. Almost every aspect of prevention, peacekeeping and conflict resolution has been explored in theory. But unless we can give an adequate response through action when confronted with a concrete crisis, unless we manifest the political will and release the required financial resources, that knowledge means virtually nothing.

Today in Africa there is a trend towards democracy, regional cooperation, the peaceful settlement of disputes and sustainable development. And that trend is gaining momentum as patterns of the past are broken. Our commitment should be to support this African quest for peace and prosperity. What happens in Africa will affect us all in one way or another.

True security begins with the individual. This is the approach taken by the Secretary-General in his report. While recognizing the full scope of measures needed to address the root causes of conflicts and not merely the symptoms, the report never loses sight of what the Secretary-General refers to as human security. We wish to congratulate him for his systematic and most challenging analysis. His recommendations should be followed up by the entire international system. My Government is committed to work actively in all relevant forums to help implement them.

Creating stable societies is probably the most compelling and also most difficult task in the prevention of conflicts. Poverty, oppression, poor economic policies and human rights abuses must be fought as a matter of priority. They should be specifically targeted in a renewed policy of partnership with Africa. That, and a focus on each country's responsibility for its own development, are cornerstones of Swedish Government policy towards Africa. Trying to do its share, Sweden is increasing substantially its budget for development cooperation with Africa, with a view to assisting in addressing the root causes of conflict.

Another considerable contribution to the prevention of conflicts would be to stop the proliferation of arms. We welcome the efforts to introduce a moratorium on the production and transfer of small arms in West Africa, as initiated by the President of Mali. The international community ought to give its full support to this and similar regional initiatives. Furthermore, all African States should be encouraged to participate in the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. We believe that the elaboration of confidence-building measures should be stimulated and supported. Some important experience that could be drawn upon has been gained within the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

The fact that people are fleeing strife or armed conflicts represents an immense tragedy for the individuals concerned. Very often it also constitutes a serious threat to stability. We support the proposal of the Secretary-General to establish an international mechanism

to assist host Governments in maintaining the security and neutrality of refugee camps and settlements.

When early warning signals of conflict are received, they must also be transformed into early action. Diplomatic efforts are at the core of these actions, but eventually the swift build-up of other means may be necessary. The conflict-prevention mechanism of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) deserves full support. At the same time, the Security Council cannot renounce its primary responsibility for maintaining peace and security. The capacity to establish rapidly an international presence is crucial in order to prevent and contain conflicts. Promising developments are under way, and we should all look into ways and means of making the United Nations standby arrangement system an efficient instrument for deployment at short notice.

The Security Council, and the United Nations as a whole, has the potential to respond quickly to the demands of mediation, good offices, observer missions and other preventive measures, including peacekeeping missions. Actually, we may never have had a better opportunity to build truly common security. But this has often been inhibited by budgetary restrictions. And we find it deplorable that there is a lack of political will to provide the necessary resources for the United Nations to be able to fully perform such tasks when they are most needed.

Conflicts continue to erupt, and others are still unresolved. We welcome the growing African involvement in conflict resolution. The political reaction of Africa to the overthrow of the legitimate Government in Sierra Leone was, hopefully, a sign that military takeovers and abuses of human rights will not be condoned. This trend should be encouraged. Sweden stands ready to support further African peacekeeping capacity.

An appalling practice of targeting civilians in armed conflicts has been spreading across the world. This is a moral and ethical tragedy. A consolidated effort must be brought about to re-establish respect for universal humanitarian norms in armed conflicts. This requires dissemination of international humanitarian law and related principles, monitoring of their application, investigation of abuses and actions against impunity. The idea raised in the report of the Secretary-General to hold combatants financially liable to their victims in these cases is certainly worth exploring.

Protection of children in armed conflict is of particular concern. It is absolutely intolerable to see 10-year-old boys and girls, with guns almost too heavy for them to carry, thrown into combat or terrorizing their neighbours — and to know that they and many of their generation are being deprived of a normal childhood. The use of children as soldiers simply has to end.

In several African conflict situations an essential task ahead is to focus on the transition from peacekeeping to peace-building. Far too often the international community has pulled out of engagements before enduring solutions or lasting support for long-term stability have been set up.

We support the recommendation of the Secretary-General that post-conflict peace-building structures should be established and that recommendations for the phase following the immediate conflict should be included in the mandate for peacekeeping missions. Particular attention should be given to issues regarding democratic institutions and respect for human rights, as well as reconciliation measures. In the aftermath of conflict, efforts for reconciliation are paramount. That requires justice and the establishment of facts, but also a vision of tolerance and future cooperation among former enemies. Deploring the executions that took place in Rwanda this morning, we believe that the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda should play an essential role in national reconciliation there. In order for that Tribunal to render expeditious justice, it needs to be strengthened by the addition of a third Trial Chamber. It is our hope that the Security Council will soon take a decision to that effect.

The Secretary-General wants his report to mark a new beginning in the relationship between the United Nations and Africa. He has challenged us to make that new beginning, and he has shown us the way. All of us, Africans and non-Africans alike, the Security Council as well as the United Nations system as a whole, must now seize the momentum and accept that challenge.

Mr. Dejammet (France) (*interpretation from French*): France pays tribute to the Secretary-General for the report that he has prepared. It is remarkable in two ways. On the one hand it contains precise and honest analyses of realities and of past experience and also makes useful and well-founded proposals; on the other, it is remarkable in its timeliness: at a moment when Africa is in transition to a search for peace and sustainable development, the report attests to the interest and involvement of the United Nations.

A week ago, the Secretary-General told us that he wanted his report to mark a new beginning in relations between the United Nations and Africa. We share that wish.

The Secretary-General has drawn a varied picture of the situation in Africa. What has been called "Afro-pessimism" was able — and is still able — to feed on statistics about conflicts and their cortège of tragedies, refugees, the development of per capita income, major pandemics and desertification. As a counterpoint, however, we must note all the positive and encouraging developments: some crises have been contained before they degenerated, thanks to preventive action; lasting solutions have been found to some conflicts; and many African countries have made real efforts to achieve democracy and good governance and in recent years have seen sustained growth.

As the Secretary-General recalled, much depends on Africans themselves. However, this does not exempt the United Nations and States outside the continent from continuing action that benefits Africa.

It is true that in recent years some events have led us to wonder whether the United Nations was not tempted to abandon Africa to its own fate. In the area of conflict prevention and settlement, the unfortunate experience in Somalia led to a clear hesitation to be involved on the ground. Such reservations and fears were then confirmed in Rwanda, where very few States came forward to act, as well as in the east of former Zaire and in Congo (Brazzaville).

The action of the United Nations and its Member States should, however, support the efforts made by the African countries themselves to resolve their problems. This applies first of all to the resources made available for conflict prevention. It is necessary to strengthen cooperation and coordination among the different levels concerned: the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity and regional organizations or initiatives. It is in this spirit that France will this year provide assistance of $1 million to the Organization of African Unity for its Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution.

But the growing role of regional organizations and initiatives must be backed by the United Nations and the Security Council so that the concerns and just interests of all of the Members of the Organization can prevail. Several recent examples demonstrate the importance and effectiveness of good coordination between the United Nations and bodies at the regional level: the competent African mediation in the Central African Republic and the actions of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in Sierra Leone show how such bodies turned to the United Nations to obtain support.

The Secretary-General underlines the importance of sanctions as an instrument for applying pressure, but he also notes the humanitarian problems that their application poses. He believes that sanctions must be targeted well. How could we not share that concern?

The Secretary-General has expressed concern about the flow of arms. The question of illicit arms transfers, in particular small arms, is crucial. Several African countries have taken courageous steps that deserve support. In this respect we should pay tribute to the initiative of Mali.

The United Nations has played a positive role in Africa with regard to peacekeeping, particularly in Namibia, Mozambique and Angola. The Secretary-General believes that all options must be kept open, as particular situations demand. These range from complex and multidisciplinary peacekeeping operations to simple observer missions. The financial constraints, however important they might be, must not become the determining factor in decision-making.

In the same spirit, there can be a complementary relationship between the United Nations and multinational forces. In the Central African Republic, the Inter-African Mission to Monitor the Implementation of the Bangui Agreements (MISAB), having successfully fulfilled its own mandate, handed over to the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic (MINURCA), which has a broader mandate.

The essential element is the capacity and will of Member States to respond to the needs of the moment. As the Secretary-General has often forcefully stressed, Member States must show the political will to act and to give the United Nations the financial, material and human resources to intervene.

In this spirit, it is important to strengthen the capacities of African States to play their part in peacekeeping in the world, especially in Africa. That was the intent of the initiative presented jointly last year by France, the United Kingdom and the United States, which is aimed at coordinating international cooperation in this

field under the auspices of the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity.

The effort of France to strengthen African capacity for peacekeeping will this year amount to approximately $40 million. This includes assistance to African countries for training in peacekeeping, including the opening, in cooperation with Côte d'Ivoire, of an international training centre; the deployment in Dakar of equipment that can be used by all the States of the region for training and for peacekeeping operations; and the organization in February 1998 by several West African States and France of a multinational peacekeeping exercise involving contingents from Africa and other continents.

This encouragement by France for a multinational treatment of security problems in Africa is also reflected in its concrete support for peacekeeping operations. That is why my country provided logistical and financial support to MISAB for 15 months and why we are providing a logistical contribution of more than 200 troops to MINURCA.

The Secretary-General expresses legitimate concerns about the problems of human rights and humanitarian assistance. It clearly remains unrealistic to believe that, with regard to fundamental rights, all countries can progress at the same pace. It is nevertheless essential to avoid creating the impression that in this area the United Nations would tolerate a double standard. That would cause lasting damage to its credibility and authority.

As for refugees, the Secretary-General rightly believes that their rights and safety must be assured, and that is it also necessary to ensure the security of the host countries and to help them to deal with the sometimes considerable problems caused by the flow of refugees. We must also avoid refugees being used by any side as a pretext for political or military action whose goals are unrelated to the fate of the refugees. In this respect we must take into consideration the proposals of the Secretary-General.

We pay tribute to the remarkable work done in Africa by humanitarian organizations, in particular the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. We believe that all States have a duty to facilitate and help their action on the ground.

The Secretary-General rightly points out that in many cases a lasting solution to instability and conflict comes through the establishment of a sound basis for State administration and the functioning of the economy.

The establishment of a State based on the rule of law, which requires clear rules, transparency in administration, a judicial system that functions normally, respect for commitments and the payment of public and private debts, cannot in our view be separated from lasting democratization. It is gratifying to note that several States are already embarked on this course.

In countries that have experienced internal conflict, particular attention must be given to national reconciliation. Only this can make it possible to re-establish the foundations for common life, which is an indispensable prerequisite for ensuring lasting peace. It is necessary to find a balance between majority rule, which is fundamental in a democracy, and the equally necessary respect for the rights of those people who belong to minorities.

Good governance has to a significant degree become one of the central themes of international cooperation, particularly through the action of the United Nations Development Programme and the Organization of African Unity. The Nineteenth Conference of Heads of State of France and Africa, held in Ouagadougou in December 1996 and which gathered together 46 heads of State and Government or their representatives, was devoted to this topic. The action led by France at a bilateral level and within the European Union is increasingly aimed at consolidating the progress of democracy and the rule of law.

The Secretary-General emphasizes all the reforms that must be adopted by African States in order to lay the foundations for sustained growth and lasting development. He is right to stress the importance of social development. The success of a policy cannot be gauged only by the "fundamentals" and financial indicators. There can be no real peace and development without a substantial rise in levels of education and training, an improvement in health care systems and a fair distribution of the fruits of growth.

The responsibility rests primarily with the African States, but that does not free other countries of their obligations.

In this context, how can we not share the concerns expressed by the Secretary-General about the brutal reduction in assistance for Africa in recent years? Assistance for development is an indispensable complement to the policies of the African countries, and it must be sufficient and effective. This is of particular

concern with respect to the least developed countries, three quarters of which are African.

For its part, France will maintain its own assistance effort. It is devoting almost 0.5 per cent of its gross national product, or $7.5 billion in 1996, to official development assistance, of which half is allocated to Africa, making France the largest donor to that continent. France has taken important steps to write off debts for the poorest and most indebted countries of sub-Saharan Africa. It has recently decided to adapt its cooperation and development aid measures to make them more effective and more coherent.

In international forums, France has unceasingly advocated an active solidarity with Africa: at the G-7 Summit in Lyon in June 1996, France called upon the most industrialized countries to increase their aid to Africa and managed to have a new global partnership defined among developing countries, developed countries and multilateral institutions. On that occasion, we also contributed to the launching of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative and successfully advocated a substantial increase in the percentage of debt relief granted by the Paris Club. During the annual meetings of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in the spring of 1997, France defended the need for a flexible implementation of the Debt Initiative, making it possible to take the specific situation of each poor country into account. Within the European Union, France worked in 1995 to have loans made available to the Eighth European Development Fund maintained in real terms, agreeing, to this end, to increase our own contribution to the Fund. In the debate on the future of the Lomé Convention, France had already expressed its commitment to maintaining the privileged relations between the European Union and the countries of Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific. It should be recalled that this relationship is reflected in the fact that 100 per cent of industrial goods and 97 per cent of agricultural products imported from Africa by the countries of the European Union enter those countries without paying any customs duties.

In this spirit, France believes that Member States and the international bodies concerned must give the greatest attention to the remarks and recommendations made by the Secretary-General in his report as regards the restructuring of international aid, the alleviation of the debt burden, the opening of international markets and support for cooperation and regional integration. We hope his message will be heard and will have an effect.

The Secretary-General invites the entire international community — the African States, the other States, the multilateral bodies — to display political will in order to consolidate and strengthen peace and development in Africa. France is ready to respond to the Secretary-General's appeal and to work to that end in the Security Council and in all the other relevant bodies of the United Nations.

Mr. Shen Guofang (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): The Chinese delegation is very pleased by the holding of the Security Council's open debate today on the Secretary-General's report on Africa. At the ministerial session of the Council last September, the Vice-Premier of China, Mr. Qian Qichen, comprehensively laid out the views of the Chinese Government on the African situation and China's policy towards Africa. On this basis, I would like to share with you China's preliminary comments and some ideas on the report.

The Secretary-General's report covers a wide scope. It contains not only an analysis of the sources of conflicts in Africa and their consequences and an overview of the experiences and lessons of the Council's response to these conflicts, but also the Secretary-General's views on Africa's economic and social development, as well as his hopes and expectations for African countries. The Secretary-General has also put forward proposals regarding peacekeeping, the promotion of socio-economic development and the role of the Council and other international bodies. We believe that the report will help draw the attention of the Council, the United Nations system and the entire international community to the importance of solving the problems faced by Africa. This is highly necessary. The Chinese delegation would like to express its appreciation for this.

This open debate should also serve to enhance our understanding of the relevant issues involved. In this context, special attention should be given to the opinions of African countries and regional organizations. We hope that follow-up actions in line with the realities of Africa and the interests of the African people will be taken, on the basis of a full exchange of views by all sides, especially African countries.

Africa is a vast continent, rich in resources and full of vitality. The African peoples are industrious and courageous. They have made tremendous contributions to and sacrifices for the world's development. African countries account for nearly one third of the United

Nations membership and represent an important force in international affairs. We must view Africa from a strategic standpoint of global peace and development. Without peace and development in Africa, there will be no genuine world peace and development. It is therefore vitally important that Africa be a truly equal partner for development. It is the unshirkable common responsibility of the international community to give strong support and help to the efforts of African countries in maintaining peace and pursuing development.

The African continent has long been plagued by conflicts and hot spots. As the Secretary-General pointed out in his report, since 1970 more than 30 wars have been fought in Africa, and in 1996 alone, 14 African countries were afflicted by armed conflicts. Conflicts in Africa can be traced to deep-seated historical causes and have a complex background. Therefore, the defusing of tensions and peacekeeping and peacemaking are formidable tasks. We are of the view that conflicts and disputes should be resolved through peaceful means such as negotiations. We highly appreciate the untiring efforts to this end made by African countries and regional organizations and the marked achievements they have scored. We support a greater role for the Council in solving African issues and timely deployment of peacekeeping operations in accordance with the United Nations Charter and at the request of the African countries concerned. In seeking solutions to Africa's problems, it is essential to respect the views of the African countries, as well as their sovereignty and territorial integrity, and to follow the principle of non-interference in internal affairs.

Peace and development are inseparable. Without development, peace cannot stand on solid ground. Africa's economic difficulties are one of the root causes of its instability. Therefore, it is a task of the utmost urgency for African countries to overcome economic difficulties and realize and accelerate economic growth. We are in favour of the Secretary-General's proposal to establish aid levels, which we hope will result in more aid to Africa.

We should all realize that assistance to Africa contributes to global development and prosperity and is in the common interests of the international community as a whole. It is by no means one-way charity to Africa. International assistance should be based on actual conditions in Africa and truly benefit the African people, without any conditions being attached. African countries are the masters of Africa. They know best their problems and needs. Only they can decide upon their course of development in the light of their specific conditions. To impose a given model on them will be counterproductive.

China is pleased to see the growing trend among African countries towards unity and self-strengthening, or pulling themselves up by their own bootstraps. The Organization of African Unity (OAU) and subregional organizations in Africa are playing an increasingly important role in both international and regional affairs and have scored commendable achievements in dealing with African conflicts and hot spots. We support the continuous strengthening of contacts and coordination between the United Nations and the OAU, as well as relevant subregional organizations. We hope to see an even greater role played by African countries on the world stage.

We are of the view that the United Nations system should focus more on African issues. We support the Secretary-General's proposal for a biennial ministerial meeting of the Security Council on the question of Africa and a summit meeting at an appropriate time. Other bodies of the United Nations system and the Bretton Woods institutions should all play a more active role. Other proposals of the Secretary-General, such as instituting mechanisms like groups of "Friends" or special conferences to handle conflicts, protect the humanitarian interests of the African people, strengthen Africa's peacekeeping capacity and assist regional efforts in Africa deserve in-depth consideration. We hope that these proposals will be translated into concrete action on the basis of extensive discussions with African countries.

China has always maintained close friendship and cooperation with African countries. Chinese leaders have paid numerous visits to Africa. During his visit to Africa in 1996, Chinese President Jiang Zemin proposed five principles for the development of a long-term and stable relationship of all-round cooperation with all African countries, a relationship oriented towards the twenty-first century. The principles are as follows: first, to foster a sincere friendship and become each other's reliable "all-weather friend"; secondly, to treat each other as equals, respect each other's sovereignty and refrain from interfering in each other's internal affairs; thirdly, to seek common development on the basis of mutual benefit; fourthly, to increase consultation and cooperation in international affairs; and fifthly, to look into the future and create a more splendid world. These principles define Sino-African relations.

To date, China has provided different categories of assistance to all 53 African countries and has completed more than 600 projects in Africa. Last year alone, we signed new assistance agreements with 41 African countries. To adapt to the changing situation, China has reformed its ways of providing aid and has adopted additional methods, such as augmenting governmental assistance with the involvement of financial institutions and companies. We have also provided preferential government loans to Africa and set up joint ventures or cooperative projects with local enterprises for the execution of assistance projects. The purpose of this is to help the recipient countries develop productive projects based on local demand and resources, enhance the efficiency of assistance, boost local employment and, at the same time, train African technical and managerial personnel. We signed framework agreements with up to 20 countries in Africa, and over 10 such projects are already in operation. China does not attach conditions to its assistance. We will continue to enhance economic cooperation and trade with African countries and support their efforts to eradicate poverty and realize sustained economic development at an early date.

To solve the problems facing Africa is a challenge not only for Africa but also for the whole international community. The aspiration for stability and peace and the pursuit of development and progress are shared by all African countries and peoples. We stand ready to meet the challenge together with the African countries and peoples so as to usher in an even better tomorrow.

Sir John Weston (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom warmly welcomes the Secretary-General's report, and we congratulate him on his comprehensive, objective and balanced analysis of the causes of conflict in Africa.

We agree that we must tackle the root causes, and not just the symptoms, of conflict. The United Nations is uniquely qualified to coordinate a comprehensive approach to the long-term, structural causes of conflict.

The Secretary-General's analysis of the realities of preventive action, peace-building and peacekeeping in Africa and his operational recommendations are also spot on. We endorse them, and so should the Security Council.

Africa has been the scene over the last few years of some of the United Nations greatest successes, but also of its greatest failures. We need to learn from both. We must admit our mistakes and do so frankly. We should have moved more quickly to secure peace in Sierra Leone before its people were subject to the brutalities of last year's military *coup*. We could, and should, have done more to halt the fighting in the Congo (Brazzaville).

The experience of intervention in Somalia was a bitter one, but that of non-intervention in Rwanda — as my Swedish colleague has eloquently reminded us this morning — was perhaps worse. Fear of the financial costs of intervention cannot be allowed to become our guiding principle. We all know the realities of intra-State conflict. Intervention can be difficult and dangerous, but it can often be unavoidable if we are to prevent humanitarian catastrophes and the insidious spread of instability. We cannot shy away from the demanding military requirements of humanitarian interventions. The United Nations has shown in Eastern Slavonia that, given the right mandates and resources, it can tackle the toughest operations. And if it does not have the resources, perhaps we should be giving greater thought to ways of providing them.

We agree with the Secretary-General that the long-term enhancement of African peacekeeping capacity is a key priority. It is also one which stands out as a partnership between developed and developing countries, between Africa and the international community. We were delighted to work with Zimbabwe and the States of southern Africa in the Blue Hungwe exercise last year and to participate in the Guidimakha exercise in Senegal this year. We stand ready to help in other similar African initiatives.

Many African nations have a proud history in United Nations peacekeeping. We should build on that. The multilateral efforts now launched under United Nations auspices, in close consultation with the Organization of African Unity, should do much to strengthen African peacekeeping capacity and help implement the recommendations in this report. Such capacity enhancement will, we hope, deliver its own rewards in the long term. But, in the short term, we must, as the Secretary-General insists, demonstrate the political will to deal with the conflicts with which we are confronted in Africa. There can be no question of a retreat by the Security Council from Africa. Its responsibilities are clear. Regional and subregional organizations have a key role, but they cannot substitute for the United Nations. What we need is active partnership with Africa.

Britain is trying to play its part, both inside and outside the Council. We welcome the extent of

cooperation in putting Sierra Leone back on its feet. We have offered $2 million for the Trust Fund; we urge others to contribute swiftly too, if peace is to be sustained.

We agree that mandates for peacekeeping operations must include clear recommendations for the transition to post-conflict peace-building. This is an area where better coordination is urgently required within the United Nations system. We look forward to the development of United Nations-wide country strategies for post-conflict peace-building, involving the Bretton Woods institutions as well as the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

We agree with the Secretary-General that sanctions can be effective in encouraging States to bring their behaviour back into line with accepted international norms. We agree that, wherever possible, "smart" sanctions should be used, targeted to hit political leaders and decision makers, and that economic sanctions should contain humanitarian exemptions to minimize their impact on ordinary people. We support the Secretary-General's call for Member States to adopt legislation making the violation of any Security Council arms embargo a criminal offence. I can confirm that the United Kingdom always pursues such violations with the full rigour of the law.

We endorse the Secretary-General's call for all African countries to provide returns to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. We agree that supplementary regional registers would be a useful further development. In this context, we, too, commend the Government of Mali's initiative for a moratorium by States in the Sahara-Sahel subregion on the import, export and manufacture of light weapons. Our Department for International Development has pledged $300,000 to a United Nations Development Programme project in support of the moratorium once the latter has been agreed.

We fully agree with the report on the need for restraint by arms-exporting countries. We have proposed and are trying to secure European Union-wide agreement on similar standards through our proposal for a European Union (EU) Code of Conduct on arms exports.

The proliferation of light weapons in Africa is as much the result of illicit trafficking as of legal transfers. The report recognizes this. We have taken forward work during the United Kingdom Presidency of the EU under the EU Programme for Combating Illicit Trafficking. A British-funded seminar in South Africa next month will seek to identify practical ways of tackling the problem at the subregional level.

The Secretary-General is right to highlight the plight of refugees, where we welcome his ideas on a mechanism to assist with the maintenance of the neutrality and security of refugee camps. We also agree on the need to take a hard look at humanitarian assistance. We support wholeheartedly his determination to ensure that humanitarian action is fully consistent with broader United Nations peace and development activities, and properly coordinated. We hope that the special challenges he lists in this field will be tackled urgently by the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs. He can count on our support.

Our general welcome for this report extends to the chapter on building a durable peace and promoting economic growth. We hope the General Assembly will also have the opportunity to discuss these issues, but we would like to endorse here and now the Secretary-General's assessment of the importance of respect for human rights — which include the rights to education, health-care and a livelihood, as well as civil and political rights — and the rule of law and the need to create a positive environment for investment and economic growth. We welcome the Secretary-General's frankness in underlining the damage done by corruption. We endorse his call for a timetable for legislation to implement the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions. An African convention could be an important part of this.

We also warmly welcome the fact that the Secretary-General has linked the issues of tackling poverty and protecting the environment. The two are inextricably linked. Some of the root causes of conflict lie in environmental issues. Rwanda, for example, has the highest population density in Africa. Eliminating poverty is essential to caring for the planet. In order to achieve this goal, Africa needs and deserves our continued and increased moral and financial support. The British Government is fully committed to the United Nations-approved international development targets, including reducing by half the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by 2015 and ensuring universal primary education in all countries by 2015; progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women; and improvements in health-care and mortality rates. Britain has pledged to increase by 50 per cent its

commitments to primary health-care, basic education and the provision of safe drinking water in Africa between 1997 and 2000 as part of our effort to ensure that these targets become a reality for Africa.

And Britain strongly supports the call to reduce Africa's debt burden. The United Kingdom has already converted into grant all its official development assistance debt held by the poorest countries, and supports the rapid and flexible implementation of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative, as expressed in the British Chancellor's Mauritius Mandate statement last September. Together with other creditor Governments and the international financial institutions, we will continue to work with the Governments of the poorest countries to reduce the burden of debt.

The Secretary-General seeks the support of the group of major industrialized countries. I can assure him today that the developing world in general, and Africa in particular, will be high on the agenda of the G-8 Summit when it meets in Birmingham from 15 to 17 May.

The scope and complexity of conflict in Africa can seem daunting. But the Secretary-General offers us hope and many practical suggestions for improving our individual and collective performance. The British Government is keen to respond. We want to make our own contribution to that collective political will, which the Secretary-General rightly identifies as key to the successful implementation of this list of good intentions. We will be listening particularly closely to our African partners, within and outside the Council. Their leadership, determination and political skills are vital to achieving the results we all want to see.

Meanwhile, the best tribute we can pay to the Secretary-General's report is to act upon it and to act quickly. Africa cannot wait.

Mr. Sallah (Gambia): My delegation wishes to thank the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for his report on Africa. My delegation would also like to pay tribute to the United States delegation, under whose presidency the ministerial meeting on Africa was held in September, as a result of which the Secretary-General was mandated to prepare the report under consideration.

The report provides a clear and candid analysis of the sources of conflicts in Africa and the reasons why they persist. Most importantly, the report provides a catalogue of remedial measures necessary to alleviate the suffering of the African people and bring about lasting peace, progress and prosperity for the African people. The report, in our estimation, is very practical, thought-provoking and challenging to us all. My delegation would once again congratulate the Secretary-General on his concern, frankness and thoughtfulness, so ably demonstrated in the report under consideration.

As human beings and as Africans, my delegation is deeply saddened by the developments in the African continent in the recent past. Africa is a very big continent, rich in resources and culture. Yet, paradoxically, the continent continues to suffer greatly. From slavery to colonization, from independence to untold economic hardship and now civil wars in many parts of its States, the African people still continue to suffer. Today, quite a number of African States are victims of armed conflicts, while the great majority of the African people languish in abject poverty.

It is very discouraging to note that more than 30 wars have been fought in the continent since 1970, 14 of them in 1996 alone, as highlighted in the report. In some of these war-torn countries, the humanitarian situation is appalling. Over 8 million African people are refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons. The present state of the African people is pathetic.

My delegation agrees entirely with the Secretary-General's diagnosis of the causes of conflicts in Africa. While we, the African people, should not look beyond ourselves for responsibility for our present situation, several external factors have contributed significantly to our present situation. Now that we are taking stock of the past with a view to finding a way forward, those States, institutions and individuals who have committed disservice to Africa and with whom we share responsibility for the present plight of the African people should acknowledge their responsibility and join us in our search for a stable and prosperous society for the African people.

My delegation is encouraged that, today, large-scale internal conflicts in Africa are declining. Governmental institutions and civil society alike continue to develop capacities to prevent, resolve and manage conflicts. Conflict prevention, resolution and management in Africa are increasingly being African-led. I have to mention here the admirable achievements of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) in Liberia and Sierra Leone. My delegation would also acknowledge the role

played by the United Nations and the Security Council, for example in creating the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), the United Nations Observer Mission in Angola (MONUA) and, recently, the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic (MINURCA). I would not forget to mention, also, the special representatives of the Secretary-General in the Great Lakes, Sierra Leone and Liberia.

Subregional entities and actors are assuming greater responsibility in collaboration with the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the United Nations. The emphasis is now on moving civil conflict from the battlefield to the negotiating table. Due to the decline of internal conflicts in Africa, reports have revealed that sub-Saharan countries have joined the worldwide reduction in military expenditures. We hope that this trend will continue to permeate the whole of Africa.

While we look forward anxiously to peace in all of Africa, we must emphasize that peace dividends are not always immediately available, due to the exorbitant costs of demobilization and military restructuring. The problem of separating combatants from refugees and the ever-increasing problem of the cross-border flow of arms retard the process. In this context, my delegation welcomes the ongoing efforts to establish an African crisis response force. My delegation would wish to take this opportunity to encourage the OAU to study the proposals for the early establishment of this force. We must remember that we Africans should take greater responsibility for solving Africa's problems.

At present, there is a movement in the African continent away from moribund single-party political systems. There is now a growing understanding of the close and inevitable links between political liberalization, good and effective governance and a stable and sound environment for economic growth. In quite a number of African countries today, political activity and thinking are getting more focused on consolidating democracy. In the Gambia, for example, the Government of President Jammeh is preoccupied with further deepening and consolidating reforms in the context of growing globalization. In this atmosphere of rapid change and fragile structures, we expect that the journey will be long and arduous. We do not, however, hope to be on it alone. Those with considerable experience may serve as sources of inspiration for us.

On the economic plane, the African continent has in recent times registered significant economic growth. In 1995, Africa registered a gross domestic product growth of 3.9 per cent. In 1996, gross domestic product grew by 4.4 per cent, the highest rate in 20 years. This growth rate in Africa was possible only due to better and more refined macroeconomic policies and increased competitiveness.

With this growing trend, there is hope for the African continent. The trend is, however, very fragile. The fragility of recent economic success stories in some African States, coupled with the present economic stagnation and the ongoing internal conflicts in others, poses the greatest challenge to the African continent. While my delegation wishes to agree with the Secretary-General on the remedial measures suggested in his report, it wishes to emphasize some of the fundamental remedies.

Economic stagnation and inequitable development have contributed greatly to much of the internal conflict and instability in Africa. Today, Africa's greatest problems include its unsustainable debt burden, economic marginalization, unfavourable and unconscionable terms of trade and painful conditionalities that are antithetical not only to a peace process but also to recovering and fragile economies.

In September 1996, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, later joined by the African Development Bank, agreed to provide debt relief for heavily indebted poor countries undertaking serious economic reforms. Whereas my delegation regards the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt (HIPC) Initiative as a benevolent gesture, the fact remains that the conditions for qualification are too stringent. It is therefore not surprising that only four African States are able to meet the requirements. If the HIPC Initiative is to be meaningful, its requirements should be such that African States should be able, with reasonable effort, to meet them.

Africa's present debt crisis is not solely an African creation. Since the international community contributed to creating this undesirable situation, we believe that it should not only acknowledge it but also share the responsibility. This fact renders the case put forward by the OAU and the Secretary-General in his report more compelling. My delegation hopes that the Secretary-General's call for conversion into grants of all remaining official bilateral debts of the poorest African countries will be heeded.

On our part, we will not tire in our efforts to search for genuine and lasting peace for Africa and economic and social justice for its people. The problems of Africa are numerous and very complex, and concerted international efforts are required to solve them. My delegation believes that African Governments, now more than ever before, have the political will to remove Africa from its present plight. The task is enormous but not insurmountable. With the support of the international community, we can do it together. We are ready and we are committed. The question remains — are you?

Mr. Türk (Slovenia): I wish to begin by commending the Secretary-General for his excellent report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. The report deals with some of the most important issues on the United Nations agenda today. By analysing the entire range of factors affecting peace and security in Africa, the report actually addresses some of the basic aspects of the current and future relevance of the United Nations.

In paragraph 7 of the report, the Secretary-General explains the challenges of Africa as those of a vast and varied continent. The Secretary-General succeeds in developing a systematic approach which brings together penetrating analysis and imaginative proposals for the search for solutions. Moreover, the report builds on the experiences of the United Nations in recent years, both expertise gained in dealing with specific situations and understanding resulting from consideration of broader topics, such as the "Agenda for Peace" and the "Agenda for Development".

One of the most powerful messages of the Secretary-General's report is expressed in the title of chapter IV, which emphasizes the intrinsic link between the construction of durable peace and the promotion of economic growth. We agree that such a link is essential. Moreover, we believe that growth and development are among the most effective guarantees to prevent conflict. They must, as such, be accorded priority, and I therefore wish to address them in some detail.

Fostering growth and development requires the political will to implement certain basic and universally valid principles of sound economics. It is these principles that must guide the formulation of economic and social policies and decision-making for development. As a country in transition, Slovenia is fully aware of the difficulties involved in structural adjustment to a highly competitive and market-based world economic system. Our own experience supports the view that all countries in transition and development, including those in Africa, that wish to participate fully in the global economy, must, as the Secretary-General stresses in paragraph 81, carry out the necessary political and economic reforms.

One of the lessons learned by Slovenia in the process of general reform is the need for enhancing and improving macroeconomic management. We therefore highly appreciate the Secretary-General's specific recommendation in paragraph 76 that a vital prerequisite for stable economic performance is a strong central bank capacity. An independent central bank not only ensures low and stable rates of inflation, but through its autonomy from governmental interference in monetary policy also contributes to a healthy division of power in the economic sphere. It thus acts as an important safeguard against corruption and other ills which accompany development and adjustment to the competitive international economic environment.

The Slovenian experience also supports the view that accelerated economic performance requires better use of existing resources. Globalization of world markets notwithstanding, a build-up of domestic savings and the establishment of a savings culture should be one of the priorities of any effective development policy. We also agree with the Secretary-General that investment in human capital, especially through education, must be recognized as a driving force for economic growth. After all, the people themselves are the first and foremost resource of development.

On the other hand, it has to be recognized that while mobilization of existing resources is crucial, the international community has an indispensable role in creating and maintaining an enabling environment for investment in Africa. Despite recent progress, the situation in many African countries is still characterized by a lack of adequate basic infrastructure and by severe fiscal problems. Such a setting can be detrimental to the inflow of private capital and thus nullify efforts at furthering the openness to trade, accountability and the protection of property rights. International assistance is therefore required. This involvement should also address the need to remove unsustainable debt overhang. Action in this area would contribute significantly to the restoration of macroeconomic stability and investor confidence.

Slovenia appreciates the clarity with which the Secretary-General approaches the issue of good

governance. We share his view that what is needed is the creation of an environment where individuals and their human rights are protected, where civil society is able to function freely and where governmental responsibilities are carried out in a proper manner. We also agree with him that such an environment needs to be supported by adequate institutional mechanisms. The central concepts here are respect for the rule of law and independence of the judiciary. The autonomy, integrity and independence of the courts must be respected. Indeed, good governance and a society based on fair and impartial enforcement of the law are essential both for the creation of a development-friendly economic environment and for the implementation of human rights.

It is common wisdom that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Prevention, however, is not always possible. This applies to the entire range of efforts for the maintenance of international peace and security. There is, therefore, a vital need to strengthen the mechanisms of peacekeeping, peace enforcement and post-conflict peace-building.

In his report, the Secretary-General offers a realistic analysis of United Nations experiences in Africa. We would like to express our regret over the fact that some of those experiences have hobbled the capacity of the United Nations to respond swiftly and decisively to crises. We hope that experiences which cannot be described as positive will not continue to dominate the international community's perception of peacekeeping. The lack of success in one of the United Nations peacekeeping missions in Africa has had a disproportionately negative effect. In order to ensure the credibility of the United Nations, the international community must be willing to act with a view to advancing the objectives of peace and security in Africa.

We agree with the Secretary-General's statement that United Nations peacekeeping will not always be the best answer to every problem in Africa or elsewhere. At the same time, it is our belief that the peacekeeping potential of the United Nations should be strengthened. This potential should be based on a credible deterrent capacity, backed by sufficient political will on the part of the international community and by cooperation on the ground. Each situation has to be considered on its own merits by the Security Council.

In addition, we are also in favour of cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity and other regional and subregional arrangements. We believe that such cooperation should be based on the framework established by Chapter VIII of the Charter.

Slovenia fully supports the principle that humanitarian assistance should be treated not as a substitute for political action, but as its supplement. The provision of assistance is a moral obligation which addresses the symptoms of conflicts. It does not deal with their causes, however, and should not be used as an excuse for not taking proper political action. In other words, humanitarian assistance should not present a diversion from other critical priorities of the host country and its people. Rational allocation of resources between humanitarian relief and development assistance is needed.

We fully agree with the Secretary-General's strong insistence on the protection of civilians, especially refugees and internally displaced persons. It is particularly important that effective measures be taken to separate the civilian population from combatants whenever necessary. Slovenia also supports a further search for appropriate methods, both at the international level and at the level of countries which host the refugees, to maintain the security and neutrality of refugee camps and settlements.

Peace is always fragile at the beginning. Peace-building structures were therefore developed in all situations in Africa where peace was established. When a peacekeeping operation passes into the stage of peace-building, it assumes a multifaceted character and acquires new dimensions. Emergency assistance on the one hand, and reconstruction and development on the other, are both necessary and interrelated. A partnership between them is needed so that the diverse expertise, capacity and approaches to problem-solving are brought together in a consistent and well-coordinated manner.

As the Secretary-General aptly pointed out in paragraph 62 of his report, the passing of the baton from relief to development assistance cannot lead to progress or durable peace. We agree that there is a need for peace-building elements to be identified with precision and integrated into the mandates of peacekeeping operations at an appropriately early stage. Priorities, including national reconciliation, respect for human rights, the resettlement of refugees and displaced persons, the promotion of national unity, democratization, and economic recovery, are sensitive, but are vital for a successful transition to lasting peace.

Some situations require specific approaches and specific measures, including sanctions under Chapter VII of the Charter. It is indicative of the tragedy of Africa that the majority of sanctions imposed by the Security Council so far have been targeted against Member States or specific groups in Africa. This makes the Secretary-General's recommendations regarding the improvement of sanctions regimes in the context of the promotion of durable peace in Africa all the more appropriate and timely.

Sanctions, as the Secretary-General points out in paragraph 25, have a way of inflicting costs on unintended victims. We share his opinion that greater use should be made of targeted sanctions and that more attention should be paid to the adverse effects suffered by neighbouring countries.

Moreover, a comprehensive and widely accepted approach to managing humanitarian exceptions to sanctions is needed. The contemporary practices of the imposition of sanctions at the regional or subregional levels need careful examination. The lessons learned have been diverse and not always positive, and they must be borne in mind in any future decision-making. At the same time, we agree with the Secretary-General's emphasis on the need to ensure more serious enforcement of sanctions by the international community. We especially support his recommendations regarding the strict implementation of arms embargoes.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that the range and variety of issues addressed in the Secretary-General's report on Africa require careful consideration. The wealth of ideas and recommendations must be utilized. We therefore support the suggestion that consideration of this report be continued not only in the Security Council, but also in the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. This process should, most importantly, enable United Nations organs to make the right decisions as the consideration of the report proceeds.

Mr. Berrocal Soto (Costa Rica) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I wish first to thank the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for his objective, realistic, lucid and comprehensive report on the situation in Africa. What we have before us is essentially a vast programme of action for the entire United Nations system; in its implementation the Security Council must obviously play a central coordinating role regarding the critical aspects of peace and security.

All of this shows once again the extent to which today's economic, social and political realities have changed the Security Council's traditional concepts and practices and the interpretation its members place on the powers, obligations and duties set out in the Charter, and in particular in Chapters VI and VII.

This in itself constitutes important progress. My delegation is pleased that we are here, in a formal meeting of the Security Council, discussing problems of international peace and security in Africa in an integrated, realistic context, basing our deliberations on a document of significant political content that also describes objectively the true framework of an ongoing crisis that bears the deep and credible signs of a crisis that is not solely political and military but also economic and social, with structural origins. The 30 African wars of recent years are simply a consequence of this situation.

The Security Council agenda is replete with items relating to Africa. In each case, when we look deeper and go beyond the outbreak and violence of armed military conflict or the brusque violation of human rights, we inevitably find the deep-seated, critical economic and social realities that are described so objectively in the report of the Secretary-General. This report could equally form the basis of deliberations in the Economic and Social Council or of a debate on priorities in the framework of the United Nations Development Programme. That is how basically interrelated and mutually dependent are the topics of international peace and security and of contemporary political, economic and social realities.

The Secretary-General therefore does well in inviting us to reflect on these aspects, because if the international community and the African countries themselves and their regional and subregional organizations do not embark responsibly and with determination on a major programme of action and development for Africa, the current crisis of security and peace will persist and a solution will never be found to close the long chapter of wars in Africa as a central and dominant item on the international agenda and on the agenda of the Security Council.

The Secretary-General's report tells us that we have gone beyond the era of grave crises relating to State borders in Africa. We have no doubt that this is true politically, but it is undeniable, for example, that a serious and complex crisis, such as that of the Great Lakes region, to a great extent has to do with the arbitrary and artificial division that separated ethnic groups and peoples, creating unequal national realities

and countries with sharp imbalances between the powerful economic resources and the geographical immensity of some countries and the small territorial size, overpopulation and poverty of others. The crisis in the Great Lakes region, with all its painful human consequences, is the concrete expression of this African truth.

If the undeniably correct decision of the Organization of African Unity in 1963 was not to reopen the painful chapter of border and territorial disputes, the correct decision now, and with a view to the future, must be, as the Secretary-General's report rightly points out, to join efforts and wills to develop and integrate, with international assistance and cooperation, subregional economic spaces and political realities in Africa. There is no way to development other than through cooperation and joint efforts. Nor is there any other way to peace.

This vision of the future is, speaking sincerely, what pleases us most about Secretary-General Annan's report. It is not a question of reopening an academic and theoretical debate. It is a question of defining and implementing a range of practical initiatives for solutions. It is a question of reversing priorities and working with a democratic and democratizing vision in a joint, integrated effort to deal with the realities of Africa. Of course, a great deal will depend on the effort and initiative of the African countries and organizations themselves. A great deal is also the responsibility of the international community and the entire United Nations system.

On the basis of its own experience, my country fully agrees on this critical course of action and the reversal of priorities set out in the Secretary-General's report. For 50 years Costa Rica has not had arms expenditures, and the priority in public expenditure is geared essentially towards education, preventive health and infrastructure. We are not saying that our national experience and our decisions regarding disarmament are valid for all, but it is true that without investing intensively and systematically in human resources and without creating appropriate and modern conditions of infrastructure and international communications, the struggle for economic development, social justice and democratic institutionality is a mission almost impossible to achieve. Ending investment in weapons is undoubtedly the simplest and most intelligent decision for developing countries. Investing in our people and doing so with a sense of moving ahead towards the twenty-first century is the essential challenge for the developing countries. This applies in the case of Africa, just as it does in Asia or Latin America and the Caribbean.

We are therefore in full agreement with that reversal of priorities and the democratic and democratizing approach that Secretary-General Annan urges us to take. Of course, the countries of Africa and all the countries of the developing world, without exception, need to work for the effective separation of the powers of the State, the good management of public affairs, respect for human rights and the rule of law. At the same time, sustainable development requires realistic and concrete decisions in order to balance budgets, obtain appropriate macroeconomic equilibrium, attract investments and create environments conducive to free competition in business and trade. All of us in the developing world are working towards this — some more and others less.

For these reasons, nothing could please Costa Rica more than to tell the Secretary-General at this formal meeting of the Security Council that we fully concur with his democratic and democratizing vision of the future of Africa. For my country, the great political and historical challenge of our African brothers and sisters at this end of century is the achievement and consolidation of constitutional systems of government, with the rule of civil authority prevailing over military rule and resulting from transparent and free electoral processes. In attaining this objective, the political will of the Africans will be absolutely irreplaceable. It is up to the leaders, the political parties and civil society in the various African countries to fully undertake that enormous, complex, difficult and historic task of building, consolidating and preserving democracy and freedom in Africa.

We in Latin America know full well that democracy as a framework and as a political reality can last and be strengthened only in societies that have managed to do away with ignorance, illiteracy, poverty and poor health conditions. To say otherwise is like preaching in the desert. In lands of poverty and social injustice, freedom can hardly grow and develop. Political history and the enormous and decisive struggle for democracy in Latin America in recent decades is clear and irrefutable proof of this truth. If freedom and democracy hold sway in our lands today it is because our peoples have at last begun to win over poverty and ignorance.

Another result has been a lessening of military conflicts and the achievement of peace between countries such as those of Central America, for example, that just a few years ago were torn apart by civil and fratricidal wars. This, which is true for us, is also true for our brothers in Africa.

Therefore, my country, which was at the very epicentre of the turmoil of the Central American wars, wishes to emphasize the realistic vision of this report of the Secretary-General and his appeal for assistance and international cooperation, which, because of the exceptional conditions in many countries of Africa, establishes a proper balance between the political will and the effort required of the Africans themselves and the inevitable responsibilities that must be shouldered by the developed countries, the international community and its organizations, including through the active involvement of the Bretton Woods institutions. The responsibility lies with us all, and not just with Africa.

The African countries can never be asked to move directly from economic crisis and civil war to structural adjustment programmes, to the opening of markets, to international competition and to globalization. The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, in close cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme and with other international bodies, must adapt their programmes and their approach to African reality to these unquestionable realities, and they must build on these bases — just as the Security Council, in its agenda for international peace and security, will have to continue to act in close cooperation with the Organization of African Unity and other subregional bodies for the success of its peacekeeping operations. This close relationship and cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity is essential to the success of our own work in the Security Council.

As Secretary-General Annan quite rightly points out, the obligation and the responsibility rest with us all. The important things are our determination and our sincerity, which will undoubtedly be put to the test on innumerable occasions in Africa and here in the Security Council, as well as in all the many decision-making bodies of the United Nations system.

In the end, if we are truly faithful to what we believe and say, we will all be able to join with President Mandela and celebrate, together with our African brothers, the achievement of our goal and the complete rebirth of Africa.

In spite of the enormous difficulties, my country is certain that this day is not far off. Africa undoubtedly has the resources and the human capacity to achieve this.

Mr. Amorim (Brazil): "Africa civilizes America". These words by a Brazilian political thinker of the nineteenth century are true in more than one sense. In few places has African influence been more greatly felt than in Brazil. Our culture, our beliefs, our values — the very ways in which our creativity expresses itself — were shaped to a large extent by African contributions. It is thus only natural that Brazil has become actively involved in a number of multilateral and bilateral initiatives that aim at stimulating the forces of peace and conciliation in Africa. Such is the case of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries, the Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic and the effort towards the formation of a southern hemisphere free from nuclear weapons — apart from our strong participation in peace efforts in Angola and Mozambique. We followed with great interest the debates that took place last September during the unprecedented Security Council ministerial meeting on Africa and are happy to take part in today's deliberations.

Africa is at once unique in its cultural and historical legacy and a rich and profound repository of our common humanity. In dealing with Africa as a separate issue we must not lose sight of the universal dimension of its individual character. The attribution of the Nobel Prize for Literature to no fewer than three prominent African writers in the last decade or so represents both a recognition of the enduring value of its specific traditions and a tribute to brilliant reflection on the plight of humankind as a whole.

In the recent and not so recent past the fate of Africa was subject to what President Mugabe has termed, in generous understatement, "undue and often disruptive foreign interference". The trauma of slavery and brutal manipulation by outside forces will probably never be completely wiped from the African collective memory. However, as a growing number of enlightened African leaders have come to stress, it is by dealing creatively and effectively with the deprivations of the present that the horrors of the past will be overcome and the prospects for the future will become brighter. This process implies coming to grips with tragic episodes of self-inflicted devastation, from which Africa can learn to extricate itself by drawing on paradigms derived from its own ancient civilizations. Let us not forget that long before conflict resolution was taken up by think-tanks in the developed world, it flourished in the councils of elders of pre-colonial African societies.

Within the cyclic image of the Yoruba existential concepts, the healing and reconstruction required at this important stage in Africa's evolution might symbolically be placed under the auspices of Obatala — or *Oxalá* — the God who represents the crescent of the human psyche

in which the virtues of social and individual accommodation are stored: patience, compassion and peacefulness. The successful struggle against institutionalized racism in South Africa stands as a portentous example of redemptive transformation through peaceful means, which places its leader, President Nelson Mandela, in an unparalleled category in today's world. In our own United Nations context, the leadership displayed by a Secretary-General who has been capable of demonstrating the powers of diplomacy even to the most sceptical is a source of invaluable inspiration.

We are indeed grateful to Secretary-General Kofi Annan for having provided the Security Council with a focused report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. Its objective analysis and recommendations call for careful examination not only by the Security Council, but also by the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and other components of the United Nations system. In the weeks and months ahead, it will be incumbent upon us to deal in the most efficient manner with the suggestions made by the Secretary-General so that our increased awareness of the challenges facing Africa may be quickly translated into tangible progress.

Africa need not be defined as a continent mired in conflict. As is widely recognized, there are many parts of Africa where peace and economic growth are taking root. If we concentrate our remarks today on those segments of the Secretary-General's report that deal with conflict, it is because this is the unquestioned area of responsibility of the Security Council.

Let us reflect on the need for consistency in the search for solutions regarding areas in crisis. The eruption of inter-communal or other forms of violence that we have witnessed in recent years in Somalia, the Great Lakes region and Liberia are not intrinsically distinct from the situations in other parts of the world.

The Secretary-General declares in one of the concluding paragraphs of his report that

> "Africa must demonstrate the will to rely upon political rather than military responses to problems." *[S/1998/318, para. 105]*

We believe that this is a postulate that applies worldwide. Most importantly, it should also apply to the United Nations efforts in promoting peace and security.

We appreciate the lessons-learned approach taken by the Secretary-General in looking at the United Nations recent experience in peacekeeping in Africa. But certain mistakes of the past merit additional highlighting. If the memories of Somalia are so disturbing to us, this is undoubtedly because of the negative impact for United Nations credibility that resulted from the phenomenon that came to be known as "crossing the Mogadishu line", or was described as "mission creep" in the former Yugoslavia — in other words, confusing peacekeeping with enforcement. We would have serious conceptual difficulties with a United Nations agenda that would seem to give priority to diplomacy and dialogue at the local level while assuming a militaristic attitude with respect to multilateral efforts. Although the deployment of operations with "credible deterrent capacity" may be necessary in situations of extreme gravity, we must guard ourselves against the temptation to seek predominantly military solutions to problems that require dialogue and diplomacy above all else.

We commend the Secretary-General for including a sub-chapter on the proliferation of arms in Africa in his report. We agree with his conclusion that the Security Council should address this issue as a matter of urgency. To give operational meaning to this recommendation, an appropriate mechanism should be devised to propose and implement ways of combating the flow of illicit arms to areas in conflict. Greater adherence by African countries to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms would also contribute to building confidence in unstable areas. We also agree with the report's general outlook on sanctions, in particular when it suggests that, whereas effective arms embargoes diminish the capacity of belligerents to sustain prolonged fights, indiscriminate economic sanctions tend to affect the civilian population more directly than those responsible for threats to peace.

We see merit in distinguishing between the internal and the external causes of conflict in Africa, as proposed in the report. But it is worth bearing in mind that even internal causes often have an external component. It is impossible to dissociate the proliferation of dictatorships during the initial decades of the post-colonial period from the bipolar rivalry of the cold war. The arsenals accumulated by some of the most repressive regimes in Africa in previous decades, with either ostensible or covert support from external Powers, had particularly deleterious consequences that stretched well into the nineties.

While recent years have often been marked by violence, disintegration and even genocide, the winds of change that have swept Africa have also brought hope. But in order for the positive forces of change and reform in Africa to advance, a new and more enlightened spirit of cooperation is required on the part of those international actors capable of making a difference. Moreover, given the historic framework of the past few centuries, during which traditional African societies were subjected to systematic exploitation and destabilization, to address African issues with the slightest hint of moral superiority is simply inconceivable. The international community should respond creatively to the positive developments in Africa and react to the less positive ones through a constructive and attentive dialogue with Africans themselves. The objective of such a dialogue should not be to impose conclusions unilaterally arrived at but to assist Africans themselves, when such assistance is required, to come up with appropriate solutions and make them work.

We agree with the need for a principled and coordinated approach to humanitarian assistance. Two important concerns should be borne in mind in this connection. First, taking into account that other United Nations organs are also responsible for addressing humanitarian problems, it will be necessary to develop the appropriate mechanisms for efficient coordination. The humanitarian segment of the Economic and Social Council, to which the Secretary-General referred in his reform proposals, could play such a role. Secondly, and with the lessons learned in the past in mind, the Security Council should be careful not to allow humanitarian action to become a disguised pretext for the advancement of the individual political agendas of any given State. Regarding the plight of refugees and displaced persons, the proposal for the establishment of a mechanism to assist host Governments in maintaining the security and neutrality of refugee camps is one that deserves positive in-depth consideration.

We welcome the remarks in the report which relate emergency assistance to reconstruction and development. We believe that there is an urgent need for devising appropriate ways for dealing, at the intergovernmental level, with the channelling of relief and development assistance to areas coming out of conflict situations. The Secretary-General seems to have fully grasped an essential aspect of this concern when he states, in paragraph 67 of the report, that we must

> "avoid situations in which conditionalities are imposed that are antithetical to a peace process".

In the search for adequate intergovernmental bodies for dealing with the transition from peacekeeping to reconstruction, the United Nations Charter can provide some guidance. My delegation would be particularly interested in looking at ways to activate Article 65, which deals with assistance from the Economic and Social Council to the Security Council.

The United Nations has been instrumental in bringing peace and relief to many areas of Africa either through peacekeeping or through the manifold programmes directed at improving the lives of the neediest. Unfortunately, however, these efforts remain insufficient.

The problem is one of resources, but it is not only one of resources. There is a qualitative dimension to be kept in mind. Technical assistance, for instance, cannot be supply-oriented, but must be targeted at the specific needs of the recipient countries and should make full use of their resources and potentialities. In areas such as the protection of human rights and the promotion of democratic governance, it would probably be beneficial to foster interaction among different African countries as well as between Africa and other regions of the developing world where progress has been made recently — in Central America, for example, as the Ambassador of Costa Rica eloquently explained. This would be an innovative and in our view promising form of extending South-South cooperation to the political and juridical fields. Since I am speaking about South-South cooperation, let me illustrate my comments: Brazil is taking the necessary legislative measures to participate in the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative. The amount of debt to be pardoned is about $1 billion — not an insignificant figure for a developing country.

Today's debate cannot possibly exhaust the complex issues before us. We will therefore reserve further comments for subsequent opportunities in this and other forums. Let me conclude at this stage by supporting the Secretary-General's proposal for reconvening a ministerial meeting on Africa on a biennial basis and for convening a summit within five years. Sustained international attention at the highest political levels over a period of years can certainly help improve our understanding of the problems and contribute to the identification of realistic solutions. Brazil is confident that an intensified international dialogue on Africa, both within and outside the Security Council, which takes the African point of view fully into account and builds upon

recent experience in a balanced way, will have a lasting impact for peace in this vast and generous continent.

Mr. Buallay (Bahrain) (*interpretation from Arabic*): I should like to express our most sincere gratitude to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive and analytical report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa.

This formal meeting of the Security Council to discuss the situation in Africa reflects the Council's interest in Africa and affirms its commitment to the future of the African continent. The many tensions prevailing in Africa today represent the gravest challenge to international peace and security. The Security Council, the principal body of the United Nations whose main responsibility is to maintain international peace and security, faces a difficult test. In addition, the Council's success in resolving the problems of Africa would undoubtedly be a distinct signal of its effectiveness.

It is of particular importance to diagnose the main problems in Africa and to determine the sources of conflict and strife in this continent. Undoubtedly the burdensome legacy of colonialism, inherited by the African States through their partition and division into sometimes heterogeneous national units, is one of the principal reasons for the many areas of conflict existing in Africa today.

Political instability in some of the African countries is the main problem in Africa. This is because the nature of authority is changed by the use of force within short intervals, which exposes African countries to harmful disturbances. Power becomes an end in itself, instead of the pursuit of stability and development in these countries. Furthermore, economic and social problems complete this vicious circle of instability. A comprehensive and radical approach to the resolution of such problems must be found. Development cannot be obtained without peace and stability, nor can peace and stability continue without economic and social development.

On the other hand, the multi-ethnic characteristics of most African States often lead to strife because of preferential treatment of some ethnic groups and discrimination against others, which ultimately constitute the nucleus of strife between these ethnic groups as an inevitable outcome. The tendency to monopolize the sources of wealth is a primary objective towards which those at the helm of authority in Africa strive. The monopolization of wealth is one of the principal reasons for protracted conflicts in the continent.

A vivid recent example of this is what took place in Sierra Leone. Those who usurped the authority of the legitimate Government monopolized natural wealth, took private and public monies and spread fear and violence throughout the country. Fortunately, the countries of West Africa and the United Nations contributed towards the return of the legitimate Government to Sierra Leone.

The international community must undertake expeditious and urgent measures to face up to the grave political, economic and social problems confronting Africa. We reaffirm the importance of the role of the United Nations in this sphere. Even though the Security Council has adopted a long series of resolutions and has fashioned initiatives and plans for maintaining peace in Africa, while some of these initiatives have succeeded, others have failed. Those failures are basically due to the international community's hesitation to intervene rapidly and effectively to maintain peace. Proof of such failure is the non-intervention to prevent the genocide in Rwanda, which was unprecedented in modern history. That reluctance had grave consequences that are still being felt today.

In my country's view, the peacekeeping operations of the Security Council are successful in containing conflicts, but are not always the ultimate solution for problems in Africa. In the absence of the will of the parties to a conflict to solve their problems amicably, it is very difficult to achieve peace in such circumstances. In fact, the opposite result may occur. However, if appropriate conditions are provided, peacekeeping operations can be the decisive arbiter between strife and peace. It is therefore extremely important for the United Nations to support regional peace initiatives because the capabilities of the United Nations, however great they may be, are not sufficient. We believe that groupings of regional States can undertake an important complementary role in preventing the spread of conflict because of their understanding of the nature of regional problems and their great ability to influence local parties.

My delegation believes that the elimination of the sources of tension in Africa requires continuing efforts that take into account the complicated reasons for conflict. In this context, the following should be kept in mind.

First, genuine will is of key importance as a driving force for achieving stability and development in Africa. The African continent is rich and fertile and can provide a sturdy basis for prosperity.

Secondly, international organizations should contribute to the rebuilding of economic structures destroyed by conflicts, which would guarantee that conflicts will not recur. In this regard, humanitarian assistance is not sufficient for peace-building, without which Africans will not be able to stand on their own feet and achieve the development they hope for, and thus eliminate the spectre of strife from their countries.

Thirdly, coordination between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) must be promoted. This will enhance cooperation between the Security Council and the OAU Mechanism for finding effective solutions to problems in Africa.

Fourthly, illegal flows of and trafficking in weapons must be confronted, and pre-emptive measures to stem them must be taken.

Fifthly, top priority must be given to the post-conflict consolidation of peace, because a fragile peace may collapse at any time.

Sixthly, coordination is needed between Security Council measures to maintain peace and security and the efforts of the United Nations development organizations. In that way, the African continent would benefit from united efforts and would not be adversely affected by scattered efforts.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to reaffirm the importance of the major role that the United Nations and its bodies can undertake through their commitment to support peace, stability and prosperity in Africa.

Mr. Mahugu (Kenya): My delegation would like to thank the Secretary-General for setting the context within which we are discussing issues of great importance to our continent, Africa. The report which he introduced last week during a formal meeting of the Council underlines his sustained efforts to address the many problems that continue to confront Africa. In accepting the urgent need to face these challenges, my delegation would like to emphasize that the current report should be considered as part of a process to respond to African needs, which are so well known.

I recall that during the special meeting of the Security Council on Africa last September, we entrusted the Secretary-General with the task of coming up with a report that would at least begin to clarify the way forward with regard to addressing the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. The report provides a good analysis of the current situation in Africa and also sets forth a multifaceted and practical set of recommendations which require the participation of the international community. I further recall that during the September meeting my Minister for Foreign Affairs stressed that there can be no development anywhere without peace, and that a comprehensive and integrated approach must be found to address Africa's complex problems. It is through the prism of this interrelationship between peace and development that my delegation would like to present its views.

Let me begin with peace and security. It is clear to all of us that the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security rests with the United Nations, and in particular with the Security Council. As the dynamics of international relations have changed, so, too, has the manner in which the United Nations deals with peace and security issues. This has been caused in large part by the failure of the instruments that have traditionally been entrusted with maintaining peace and security, as well as the complexities that emerge out of every unique conflict situation. There have been subsequent attempts to diminish the Charter-based role that the United Nations must play in maintaining international peace and security. Indeed, a new thrust has emerged which seeks to regionalize peacemaking and peacekeeping activities. We maintain that regional and subregional organizations can play only a complementary role to the primary one which rests with the United Nations. This complementary role has been taken up quite well in the past few years by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in West Africa and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in the Horn of Africa, for example.

As the Secretary-General clearly outlines in his report, peacemaking efforts need to be timely, appropriate, well prepared and well coordinated. In this regard, we welcome the recent creation of an Executive Committee on Peace and Security convened by the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, intended to enhance cooperation, policy coherence and information sharing. This collaboration can further be facilitated by re-energizing the annual meeting of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the United Nations chaired by the two Secretaries-General. Indeed, as the traditional General Assembly resolutions on cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU stipulate, the United Nations is invited to assist the OAU in strengthening its

institutional and operational capacity in the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts in Africa. We believe that the strengthening of these institutional and operational capacities through the enhancement of an early warning system, transfer of technology, assistance in the training of personnel, exchange and coordination of information, logistical support and, most importantly, the concrete mobilization of financial support, are urgently required.

Having underlined the complementary role of regional and subregional organizations, it is worth addressing the whole question of mediation. It is important that international actors avoid competing once a framework of mediation has been established. However, we also believe that if complementary efforts seek the same objective and are well coordinated, then the outcome will be a good one. It is incumbent on the principal mediator in such situations to generate a positive and cooperative attitude and not to assume a proprietary stance with regard to ongoing mediation efforts. Such positions exacerbate the suffering of the innocent people whom the efforts are designed to help.

Another proposal which we support is the mobilization of international cooperation for peace efforts through the creation of groups of "Friends". Such groups would harmonize views, coordinate action and source essential resources required for the peace process.

Having recently arrived from a visit to Africa as the Chairman of the sanctions Committee on Angola, I can only agree with the Secretary-General that a more effective targeting of sanctions is necessary. In the case of Angola, the sanctions are well targeted, have proved effective and are indeed "smart" sanctions. In other cases, the sanctions are too generalized, causing unintended suffering to a civilian population and having no visible impact on those they are intended to affect. It is also incumbent on the international community to ensure that the provisions of these sanctions regimes and, most particularly, arms embargoes, are not flouted.

My delegation fully supports the Secretary-General's recommendations, many of which have been raised before to no avail, with regard to peacekeeping and the role of the United Nations in peacekeeping in Africa. The separation of antagonists in refugee camps, the establishment of safe corridors for refugees and the implementation of comprehensive settlements are in line with the principles contained in the Nairobi regional summits held in 1996 on the crisis in eastern Zaire. At that time, the Heads of State and Government of the subregion urgently called for a separation of those we called "intimidators" and bona fide refugees, requiring the setting up of safe corridors and temporary sanctuaries to facilitate humanitarian assistance. These calls went unheeded. The result was genocide and the disappearance of a large number of refugees who remain unaccounted for — a hard lesson indeed.

On preventive action, we can only hope that the example set by the African countries themselves, notably in the Central African Republic and in Sierra Leone, will be emulated. There is no substitute for timely and appropriate responses by the international community.

We further support the concrete proposal for strengthening regional and subregional initiatives. We believe that, in view of the continuing financial difficulties which the United Nations is facing, a strategy of co-deployment with regional, subregional or multinational forces is viable.

I now turn to humanitarian issues. The problem of conflicts has created continuing humanitarian emergencies in Africa. Not only are we seeing massive displacements of Africans across borders, but also significant internal displacements of peoples due to these conflicts. It is worth reiterating that a coordinated approach towards humanitarian assistance should continuously be sought. In situations of conflict, war abuses proliferate. It is therefore useful for human rights missions to be deployed, providing substantive international pressure on the combatants to respect the human rights of civilians.

We also support the Secretary-General's endorsement of the notion that children should be seen as "zones of peace" in conflict situations and that concrete efforts should be made to enable them to have as normal a life as possible, conflict situations notwithstanding. To this end, we encourage the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on the impact of armed conflict on children to continue sensitizing the international community and crystallizing solid international legislation to respond to this need.

Due to the continuing problem of insecurity in refugee camps, my delegation also supports the idea of establishing an international mechanism to assist host Governments in maintaining the security and neutrality of refugee camps.

An important area which the Secretary-General has previously addressed is the impact of so-called armed labour. This refers to a group of displaced persons roaming across borders with weapons. We believe that a focused attempt to deal with this dangerous phenomenon, which has the potential to destabilize whole subregions, must be found.

Regarding economic issues, it is clear to us that the sources of conflict, although varied, have at their root the unfortunate reality of poverty. Africa remains marginalized by current international economic relations. The Secretary-General has addressed the impact of this economic weakness in conflict situations. We believe that despite these problems some African countries have recorded great successes and continue to make serious efforts to lay a solid foundation for their future development.

At the regional level, strategies towards these goals are being finalized. At the national level, far-reaching economic reforms have been implemented. It bears repeating that these efforts require the support of the international community. In this context, we agree that there is an urgent need to redefine Africa's relationship with the major players within the current economic world order, including the Bretton Woods institutions. Key within the framework of addressing these major international economic questions is the urgent need to reduce the debt burden which has crippled many African economies.

In this regard, we support the Secretary-General's recommendations that the benefits of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative be expanded to include a greater number of African countries. Given the negative impact of the huge debt problems we face, the support of the international community cannot be overemphasized. His call to all creditor countries to convert into grants all the remaining official bilateral debts of the poorest African countries also deserves our complete support.

With increased access to markets, support for adjusting to a globally competitive trade environment, the provision of at least 50 per cent of aid from our development partners to be spent in Africa and a focus on social development, especially in the investment of human resources, we believe we can begin to make that solid move out of poverty and into prosperity, and with that prosperity the scourge of conflicts will recede even further from the lives of Africans.

And now, in conclusion, I would like to address follow-up action as my delegation sees it. In order to sustain the momentum gathered in this debate today and to deal comprehensively with the problems facing Africa, my delegation endorses the Secretary-General's recommendation that a biennial meeting of the Security Council be held to assess the effort undertaken and the further action needed. We will also consider favourably the idea that the Council convene at the summit level within five years to look at this problem.

For us, this whole exercise is a process and not an event. A multifaceted approach to implementing these complex recommendations is clearly called for. To this end, we envisage that, following this debate, the Security Council could create a concrete mechanism for subsequent follow-up action. The instrument creating this structure, we suggest, should set out in very clear terms the parameters within which we address the issues of Africa. This mechanism would implement the Secretary-General's recommendations which fall within the Security Council's own competence and put in place a structure to enable follow-up with other organs and institutions which would need to implement recommendations within their own competencies.

We also think that the Security Council should consider adopting a staggered timetable that seeks to maintain focus on the issues raised in the report and to harness the political will to implement the recommendations so well laid out. Indeed, September, when most Foreign Ministers will be in New York, would be a good time to assess the efforts undertaken so far and further action required.

Today's discussion is only an introductory one. It is, in our view, intended to set rolling a process of active engagement and continued commitment which will put in place a new and meaningful partnership between Africa and the rest of the world. The Secretary-General's imminent visit to Africa will, we believe, carry forward this momentum and assist in underscoring the United Nations continued commitment to Africa. We wish him Godspeed and great success.

Let me underline that the reasoning behind this approach is to ensure that no hasty decisions are reached and that a cogent, well-thought-out process to concretize a stable, peaceful and prosperous Africa begins. May we all have the political will to realize this objective.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of Japan.

I should like to begin my statement by commending the report of the Secretary-General on Africa for the comprehensiveness of its coverage, for the incisiveness of its analysis and for the opportuneness of many of its recommendations. Against the background of many challenges that Africa faces today, it is incumbent upon us in the United Nations to analyse the conceptual framework of cooperative actions that are needed by the international community in addressing these challenges, cutting across the political and economic vista of Africa, and to identify the role of the United Nations in our joint endeavour to translate this conceptual framework into concrete action.

In saying this, I wish to make clear that, for today, I shall confine myself to those aspects of the Secretary-General's report which fall properly within the purview of the Security Council and leave the detailed treatment of other equally important aspects of the report that would more appropriately be considered within the framework of other organs of the United Nations, while confirming my conviction that, in executing our strategy for Africa, which is afflicted with a complex of problems that are organically linked, a holistic approach is absolutely essential.

In the brave new world of the post-cold-war era, where we are witnessing challenges to peace and security emerging at the intra-State level as much as at the international level, and where military means cannot be the only or even the predominant tool for maintaining peace and security, we are bound to approach the issue of how to maintain international peace and security in a much wider context that would encompass political, economic, social and even cultural factors. The proper execution of the role of the Security Council, with its primary responsibility for the maintenance of peace and security, can be fulfilled only on this conceptual recognition. It was based on precisely this line of thought that the presidential statement issued at the ministerial-level meeting of the Security Council last September called upon the Secretary-General to take a comprehensive approach when preparing the report that is now before us.

There is no question whatsoever that one of the most urgent tasks that the international community faces on the eve of its entry into the twenty-first century has to be the problem of how best to respond to the situation in Africa, where numerous conflicts have been afflicting the people of that vast continent in an environment fraught with the problems of economic and social development as well as the issue of governance. I say this for the following reasons.

First, the basic instability in much of the political fabric of Africa, due largely to intra-State and regional conflicts, can have a direct and serious bearing on international peace and security.

Secondly, stagnation in the economic development of Africa, if left unattended, will not only produce a crippling effect upon the world economic system, but lead to a situation in which social grievances and discontent on a global level, emanating from the marginalization and further alienation of this continent, could bring about serious social instability on a global scale. By contrast, the full integration of the African continent into the world economic system through the participation of the peoples of Africa in the expansion of global prosperity could have an enormously beneficial effect on the world as a whole.

Thirdly, the value-based community of nations of today simply should not and cannot close its eyes to the political, economic and humanitarian realities of Africa, where fellow human beings are suffering from the miseries emanating from armed conflict, extreme poverty, social injustice and lack of good governance. The Secretary-General makes this point when he candidly states in his report that

> "by not averting these colossal human tragedies, African leaders have failed the peoples of Africa; the international community has failed them; the United Nations has failed them". [*S/1998/318, para. 5*]

The strategic framework approach encompassing the political, development and humanitarian fields, which the Secretary-General proposes in his report, has Japan's full support. In fact, that is exactly what Japan has been consistently advocating as a centrepiece for a new strategy for Africa ever since it embarked upon the first Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD I) in 1993. For the last several years, since a new opportunity surfaced for Africa as a result of the demise of the East-West confrontation, Japan has been emphasizing that, in coping with the African problem, the political and military aspects of conflict prevention, socio-economic development and the realization of a society in which diversity in political values should be tolerated must be pursued in an organically integrated manner. It is incumbent upon the international community to promote cooperation towards that end, based on this new and common strategy.

In undertaking these efforts, Japan hopes to serve as a catalyst for international cooperation on Africa, in accordance with a unified strategy, with the United Nations playing a central coordinating role. In so doing, it wishes to emphasize the following three points.

First, in order to respond effectively to the situation in Africa, the activities of the various bodies of the United Nations, as well as the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and other regional and subregional organizations in Africa engaged in pursuing the goals of the prevention and early resolution of conflicts and of post-conflict peace-building — together with the activities of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the international community at large pursuing development goals — should be integrally coordinated in a mutually reinforcing and complementary manner and should be closely interrelated on the basis of a unified comprehensive strategy. The metaphor of a chamber orchestra comes to mind, where each instrument has its own very specific but essential part to play in order to produce a single harmonious symphonic work.

Secondly, this comprehensive strategy should be based upon the principle of responsibility-sharing among all countries, in accordance with the concept of global partnership. In this context, the most appropriate centre for creating momentum for summoning the necessary political will of the international community, including African countries, on the basis of the concept of ownership, so that the numerous actors might play their respective roles under this common strategy, should be the United Nations.

Thirdly, for the implementation of this strategy, it will be necessary to take an individualized pragmatic approach, devising the most appropriate ways of dealing with the particular circumstances of each conflict and responding to each country's specific needs.

It is with those three aspects in mind that Japan has been addressing the problem of conflict prevention and resolution in Africa through such initiatives as the Tokyo Conference on Preventive Strategy in January this year, on the political front, and the problem of development through such undertakings as the Second Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD II) in October of this year, on the economic front.

Against this background, Japan believes that the Secretary-General's report is most opportune in the context of the serious and gigantic challenges that the international community as a whole faces in relation to Africa. The fact that the report has generated so much interest inside and outside the United Nations is eloquent testimony to the degree of awareness within the international community about the urgent need for intensified international cooperation on Africa at this moment. The issue now is how to put this momentum into concrete action through implementing these wise words of counsel contained in the recommendations.

At this juncture, let me now touch only upon some of the more salient recommendations contained in the report.

First, the problem of trade in arms has to be squarely tackled by the international community if we are serious about what we are saying in defence of peace and stability in Africa. Indeed, the increasing inflow of arms into the African continent is one of the main factors responsible for the tragic situations in the region. Those who export arms to Africa should feel a major responsibility for this situation. Japan believes that we in the Security Council should take this situation in all seriousness and seek effective ways of monitoring the activities involved in the export of small arms. Japan, as a country which strictly maintains its Three Principles of Non-Export of Arms, which effectively prohibit the export of arms anywhere, is convinced that it is high time the international community addressed this fundamental root cause of the many tragedies affecting Africa or anywhere else in the world torn by conflicts.

Second, in the same context, the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, created at the initiative of Japan in collaboration with the European Community in 1991, can more profitably be utilized in containing potential as well as actual conflicts in Africa. Enhancing transparency in the respective defence capabilities of nations can be an important means of building confidence among neighbouring countries and can be instrumental in preventing undue diversion of precious resources for excessive defence capabilities at the expense of socio-economic development efforts. In view of this, I should like to request that the Register be more fully implemented throughout the world but more particularly in relation to Africa. The idea of establishing supplementary regional and subregional registers of conventional arms, as the Secretary-General suggests, is worthy of early implementation.

Third, in today's world where the use of force as an enforcement measure is becoming increasingly difficult,

Japan considers that non-military sanctions can prove useful provided that they are applied judiciously and in a targeted manner. In applying a sanction, three major factors will have to be kept closely in mind: its appropriateness in relation to the desired objective, its effectiveness in implementation on the part of participating parties, and its impact upon the humanitarian situation in the targeted country. Thus, it is the considered view of Japan that the international community should conduct a thorough study of these different aspects of the sanction, so that the sanction can be a truly useful and effective instrument for enforcing peace with justice upon the party in breach of its sacred obligations under the Charter. The recommendation of the Secretary-General on this score contains interesting suggestions which merit our serious consideration.

Fourth, on the humanitarian front, I should like to emphasize that in considering humanitarian assistance to the civilian population who are the victims of conflicts, it is essential to take into account, from the very beginning and in a long-term perspective, the requirement of post-conflict peace-building efforts. Through all the stages of conflict management, from the stage of conflict prevention to those of peacemaking, peacekeeping, and post-conflict peace-building, the whole process has to be looked at as a process in continuum, and to be treated in an integral manner in our consideration of conflict management in Africa.

Fifth, in the same vein, it is important to realize that we have recently been witnessing an unfortunate trend in which humanitarian activities are faced with serious problems of security which critically hamper their activities. In fact, they are often in need of support and protection by military components of peacekeeping operations. Increasingly, protection by the military components is becoming necessary in order, for example, to ensure the distribution of humanitarian relief supplies or to separate the innocent civilian refugees from ex-combatants and criminals in refugee camps. It is Japan's strong belief that we in the Security Council must urgently focus much more attention on this issue.

I have so far tried to pick out only a few of what my delegation regards as the more important aspects of the report of the Secretary-General. However, the report is so rich in its contents, as well as in its implications, that to draw concrete conclusions by way of policy recommendations of the Security Council through an open debate of a day or two will simply not suffice. In view of this and in the light of the importance of this report, I should like to suggest that a working group be established in the Security Council to study in depth each and every recommendation contained in the report and to devise a plan of concrete action that might be taken by the Council. The Council could oversee this process, reviewing the progress made by the working group on a regular basis. The outcome of this exercise could then be submitted to the Security Council for consideration at a meeting convened possibly at the ministerial level in September.

In concluding my statement today, I should like to underscore the importance of mobilizing the political will of all the participants in the process, whether in Africa or on other continents, to address resolutely the myriads of problems that the continent of Africa faces today. In fact, it is almost trite to emphasize the critical importance of political will. However, it is important to bear in mind that it is so easy to speak of the importance of political will, especially that of others but not of one's own. What is needed now is a commitment on the part of each one of us to mobilizing our own political will. As I have stated earlier, Japan has been offering its share of contribution to conflict prevention and development in Africa through various means available to it. In fact, in the last five years, we in Japan have been offering our sweat and toil amounting to 5.4 billion dollars.

I wish to conclude my statement by offering the pledge that the people of Japan will continue to work with the people in Africa for the peace and development of Africa.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Zimbabwe. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Mapuranga (Zimbabwe): I have the honour to deliver a statement on behalf of the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity, His Excellency President Robert Mugabe of the Republic of Zimbabwe.

I would like to thank you, Sir, for convening this meeting to allow the Security Council and interested delegations to consider the Secretary-General's report entitled "The causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa".

When the Security Council met in a special ministerial meeting on 25 September 1997, a new

partnership was launched between the OAU and the United Nations, between Africa and the international community. We are deeply grateful to the Secretary-General for his objective and comprehensive report, which, in our view, constitutes the first effort at giving content to this partnership. The wide spectrum of issues covered in the Secretary-General's report clearly reflects the complexity of the African agenda and the need for it to be adopted most urgently as an international agenda. For Africa is the world's poorest region, has been disproportionately afflicted by intra-State conflicts, and therefore merits the special attention of the United Nations in particular and the international community in general.

Over the past few months we have witnessed a dramatic broadening of the horizons of peace and stability in Africa. The return of peace and democracy in Liberia and Sierra Leone as well as the significant strides towards peace in Angola bear ample testimony to Africa's renewed quest for democracy, peace and stability. Despite Africa's resolve and determination to take greater responsibility for the resolution of African crises, including armed conflict, we wish to support the Secretary-General's perception, and to reiterate our full cognizance, of the fact that there can never be an exclusively African agenda for peace: it will always be a United Nations agenda to which the entire international community must subscribe and lend its support. The presence on 25 September 1997 of the OAU Chairman and the OAU Secretary-General at the special ministerial meeting emphasized the continent's desire for special treatment by the United Nations in general and by the Security Council in particular.

We therefore call upon the international community not only to put its full weight behind Africa's peace initiatives, but also to assess and buttress the OAU's institutional and operational capacity in the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts in Africa. Let me recall and emphasize here that the Cairo Declaration of 1993 stipulated that the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution would have as its primary objective "the anticipation and prevention of conflicts" [*A/48/322, annex II, AHG/DECL.3 (XXIX) Rev.1, para. 15*]. Accordingly, we would have wanted the report to give greater emphasis to conflict prevention, which is the chief plank in the OAU doctrine on Africa's conflicts.

The Secretary-General's report emphasizes the need for concrete action. In this regard we call upon the Secretary-General to send a team to OAU headquarters to: take measures to speed up the establishment of an early warning system there; provide technical assistance and training of personnel, including a staff exchange programme; institutionalize the exchange and coordination of information between the respective early warning systems of the OAU and the United Nations; provide needed logistical support; and mobilize financial support for the OAU Peace Fund.

Africa fully supports the Secretary-General's perception, and is fully cognizant, of the fact that early detection of incipient conflict is not enough to ensure peace and stability. This is why African countries are keen to address the equally important matter of building capacities for early and effective responses to conflict on the political and diplomatic front, as well as rapid and effective deployment of peacekeepers on the military front. That was the collective decision of the OAU Assembly of Heads of State and Government when it issued its Addis Ababa Declaration in June 1995. Since then, there has been a proliferation of initiatives on capacity-building in Africa in the realm of rapid deployment and peacekeeping. I wish to reiterate Africa's desire that such efforts, if well-intentioned and properly coordinated by channelling them through the OAU or its subregional organizations, could greatly supplement Africa's own efforts at ensuring peace and stability on the continent.

Of late there has been talk of an African renaissance. News of renewed economic growth in Africa has for the most part been communicated to the international community in terms of statistical figures such as percentages of gross domestic product, reduced budget deficits and curtailed public expenditure, as well as lower inflation rates. However, such statistics are largely silent on what is really happening to the African people at large. Whereas the structural adjustment programmes prescribed for many African countries by the Bretton Woods institutions have often reflected impressive figures, they have also had a very severe and adverse impact on African societies in terms of curtailed social spending, particularly on health and education facilities, and in terms of growing unemployment. As a result, we have on our hands cases of African countries whose economic statistics are improving, and are even impressive, but are not matched by an improvement in the conditions of living of the bulk of the African people. Some of those countries are actually de-industrializing, and are no nearer to eradicating absolute poverty among the generality of their people. Many African countries continue to spend more on debt servicing than they do an education or health, or on education and health combined

in some cases. We cannot have economic development without an impact on poverty alleviation. We therefore support the Secretary-General's perception that economic development must manifest itself in the quality of life and the standard of living of the African people.

As we lay the foundations of the new partnership I talked about earlier, it is Africa's hope that the international community will go beyond facts and figures and be more human and personal, rather than statistical, in its dealings with Africa. I wish to recall the words of the President of Zimbabwe, who said in his address before this Council on 25 September 1997,

> "we strongly believe that the peace and security that we so ardently seek to achieve cannot be attained in the conditions of abject poverty that are prevalent in Africa today. We are convinced that a politically stable, prosperous and vibrant Africa is the best place to contribute to greater global peace and security." [*S/PV.3819, p. 3*]

We commend the Secretary-General's perception that there is an intrinsic link between development, peace and security.

Peace and stability are predicated not just on economic and social development and the elimination of absolute poverty. Africa has been seriously addressing the issue of good governance, particularly the enhancement of human rights and further democratization of the continent, as spelt out in the OAU's Addis Ababa Declaration. African leaders have endeavoured to do this collectively through the instrumentality of the OAU.

The OAU has monitored no fewer than 40 multi-party elections and referendums so far in this decade alone. But democratic elections alone are not the sum total of democracy. Africa has embarked on the protracted process of building the institutions of democracy and instilling and nurturing a culture of democracy where once there was that of autocracy and military rule. But it is also true that the seed of democracy cannot germinate, let alone thrive, in the soil of mass poverty, illiteracy, hunger and disease. We therefore appeal to the international community to come to Africa's assistance by supporting that continent's own efforts, which stem from a recognition of the need for accelerated human resources training, technology transfer, debt remission, capital investment and access to international markets on the basis of equitable terms of trade. We agree entirely with the report of the Secretary-General on these important matters.

Finally, at this stage, no one can claim to be ignorant of Africa's special situation or of the fact that as a region it requires special attention. More than further studies and analysis, Africa longs to see the translation of plans and programmes from the drawing boards to the implementation stage. The United Nations Programme for Africa's Economic Recovery and Development and the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, and now the United Nations Special Initiative on Africa, were all seminal documents. Like the Secretary-General, we appeal for the political will of the United Nations in particular and the international community in general, to give a new momentum to Africa's push for peace and development. Accordingly, we support the Secretary-General's proposals on follow-up activity by the Security Council at the ministerial level. Africa will not be found wanting in political will and commitment to seize the opportunities that may be presented, for Africans have stated on several occasions that the development and welfare of Africa are primarily the responsibility of the Africans themselves.

The President: There are a number of speakers remaining on my list. In view of the lateness of the hour and with the concurrence of the members of the Council, I intend to suspend the meeting.

The meeting was suspended at 1.30 p.m.